SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

THE MAKING OF A WARRIOR PHILOSOPHER 1921 - 41

DR. SUMIT MUKERJI

Subhas Chandra Bose : The Making of a Warrior Philosopher 1921-41, is the result of more than ten years of dedicated research by Dr. Sumit Mukerji. It analyses the evolution of the Political Philosophy of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. On the basis of ample documentary evidence and face-to-face interaction with more than twenty revolutionaries and I.N.A. Officers, it seeks to unravel the truth about the murky areas of Netaji's life and thought. It explores the foundations of the philosophy of Netaji that culminated inhis emergence as India's first and only warrior philosopher in the I.N.A. phase. It probes whether Netaji was a Fascist or a Socialist, Democrat or a Dictator, Idealist or a Realist, Spiritualist or a Materialist. It isan attempt to project the real Netaji and the factors that contributed to his making. The book is sure tosatisfy the intellectual curiosity of many to whom Netaji is still both an icon and an enigma.

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Dr. SUMIT MUKERJI

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
PRESIDENCY COLLEGE
KOLKATA

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Subhas Chandra Bose
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This book is dedicated to the unsung heroes and martyrs who struggled to burst asunder the chains of colonial bondage.

FOREWORD

I feel greatly honoured in writing this foreword to the book, "Subhas Chandra Bose: The Making of A Warrior Philosopher 1921-41", written by Dr. Sumit Mukerji. I recommend this book to the youth and women of our country and especially to all members of left parties who till today do not seem to have a clear idea of Netaji's political, social and economic ideology. Dr. Mukerji has taken great pains to evaluate Netaji's political ideology. He has proved without doubt that Netaji was committed to the idea of a socialist form of government suited to the Indian ethos and ground realities. Dr. Mukerji has in great detail brought out all the conflicts Netaji went through and how he finally came to a decision. He has also proved conclusively that although Netaji visited Germany and Italy after leaving India in 1940, he did not subscribe to the fascistic ideas of Hitler and Mussolini. It also must not be forgotten that before reaching Germany he tried to go to Soviet Russia but Stalin did not approve of the idea, as he was busy with other important work.

I am also very happy to see that Dr. Sumit Mukerji has traced Netaji's progress from being rather conservative sober Indian to later becoming very broad minded and international in his views. This aspect of Netaji's was very apparent to those of us who were associated with him in the INA. We were very proud of the way he dealt with all the foreign dignitaries. In fact they all looked up to him as their natural leader. Especially with the Japanese he made it quiet clear that it was not his intention to exchange British imperialism for Japanese imperialism and he would not tolerate even the slightest interference from them once we had crossed to India. There is no doubt that although the INA was defeated on the battlefield it was responsible for hastening the withdrawal of the

British Government from India and granting of independence. The INA was responsible from breaking the loyalty of the Indian Army to their British masters. It was this fact, more than any thing that convinced the British to leave. Another factor was the absolute unity Netaji managed to bring about among Hindu-Muslim-Sikh-Christians and all other minorities. However in order to counteract this British cunningly partitioned the country on communal lines which we are having to deal with as a major problem until today. I hope this book will help to make us all understand what Netaji's Blueprint for independent India was and we will work towards achieving it.

JAI HIND

August 5, 2004

DR. (COL) LAKSHMI SAHGAL

I.N.A.

PREFACE

This book is a partially modified version of my doctoral thesis submitted at Jadavpur University in April 2000, for which the Doctorate degree was conferred on me in April 2001. The work was undertaken during the centenary celebration of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in 1997. It was undoubtedly a propitious moment for taking up a task of such magnitude as in the centenary year; a number of rare books that were long out of print were reprinted. There was also a renewal of interest in Netaji and scholars and intellectuals were motivated by the urge to represent and interpret the life and work of Netaji in a new light. New material was available in abundance and a number of books, journals and monographs, provided a fillip to research on Netaji. I made a modest effort to utilize all the resources accessible to me with the objective of providing a new interpretation and projection of the life work of Netaji in the light of the new material at my disposal. The life of Bose has been a perennial source of interest for scholars, intellectuals and researchers. A number of works, biographical and critical, have been published but they have concentrated primarily on the romantic and spectacular aspects of Bose's life manifested in the final phase of his career when he emerged as the commander of the INA.The present book adopts the pre-INA phase as the focal point of analysis and seeks to establish that the foundation of Bose's emergence as a martial hero, were laid in India and thus the two phases of his life were complementary and should not be treated in isolation. It further depicts Bose as a warrior-philosopher whose martial spirit was punctuated by a deep philosophical sense and this imparted a rational element to his actions. The present book intends to provide a counterpoint to the view that Bose was prone

to unreason and impulse .The name of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose evokes one's spontaneous admiration and an element of emotion is inescapably associated with the popular response to him. As a researcher I find nothing wrong in this provided it does not assume the form of naïve adulation. I feel that no researcher can entirely transcend his personal preferences and predilections but can moderate and control them and thereby avoid being partisan in a petty sense .I have tried to judge Subhas with a critical eye retaining at the same time, my historical respect for him.

I thank the Government of West Bengal for permitting me to complete my work. I made full use of the National Library, the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture Library, The Jadavpur University Library, the Nehru Museum Library, and the Calcutta Municipal Corporation Library. I also worked at the National Archives and obtained source material from the Alipur Court archives. I also availed of the facilities of the library of Hooghly Mohsin College where I was posted at the time. To all the library authorities, I am thankful. I can never adequately express my gratitude to Dr. Sanjukta Bhattacharyya Head of the Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University, for her ardent and affectionate indulgence and patronage as well as her invaluable guidance. I can never forget the persistent encouragement of Dr Niranjan Bhattacharyya whose interest in my book never dwindled for a moment. I am eternally indebted to Dr. G. L. Adhya, Professor NCERT who was all throughout an inspiring propellant to my endeavour from distant Delhi. My colleague Dr. Himangshu Banerjee, retired professor of Zoology, was a consistent and potent motivating force behind my work. I also benefited immensely from my interactions with Prof. Nilagrib Deb Roy who proved a powerful intellectual stimulant and helped in my perspective formation. I found

in Mr. Girish Chandra Maiti, a priceless asset who poured out to me, his wide repertoire of information on Netaji. I must also thank Dr. Gautam Siddhanta, the then Principal of Hooghly Mohsin College from the core of my heart for helping me of his own accord when I needed it most. I cannot also forget the moral support I received from Mr. Mohantosh Chatterji a devout follower of Netaji in Delhi. Prof. Ashoke Mustafi, a well-known name in the academic world, was a source of inspiration and a genuine wellwisher. I also cannot repay my debt to Capt. Laxmi Sehgal who extended unstinted help to a stranger like me. It was most magnanimous on her part to consent readily to write a foreword to my book. I must further acknowledge the tremendous help I received from the late Dr Sisir Kumar Bose who despite heavy preoccupations, spared his valuable time for me and equipped me with hitherto unpublished material on Netaji.I was lucky to associate myself with some of the great revolutionaries of Bengal who opened their hearts to me and I caught a glimpse of the fire that glowed within them.

Dr. Digbijay De Sarkar, a noted academician, was the lagest single factor instrumental for making the publication of this book a reality and any formal expression of thanks would only belittle this great soul. My thanks are due to my Publisher who took up the arduous task of preparing the book and completed it very efficiently. The blessings of my parents, which have kept me up and going in the midst of all crises, have made this book possible. I also cannot forget the heartfelt sympathy and support provided by my late Father in law and also my Mother in law from which I derived strength that stood me in good stead. My wife Sohini was an unfailing source of sustenance and solace, which I cannot adequately express in words. She constantly monitored the final draft of the book and suggested necessary changes and corrections, which contributed immeasurably to the perfection of the work. I also thank

those who placed hurdles on my path and tried to thwart my mission, which only redoubled my resolve to carry my work to its completion. I leave the final judgment of my book to my readers and hope that it will be judged on its own merit.

DR. SUMIT MUKERJI

DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE,
PRESIDENCY COLLEGE,
KOLKATA,
FEBRUARY 1, 2006

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Chapter - I

PROLOGUE

The eventful life of Subhas Chandra Bose has been the object of intensive research, debate and analysis both biographical and critical. However scholars and writers have shown a tendency to glorify the final phase in the life of Subhas, that is the INA phase as the most significant phase of his political career. The adventurist and romantic elements of his life, have a natural meretricious effect that captivates the imagination. They also have a stimulating and exciting impact on the mind. Historically speaking, the INA has immortalized Bose and ensured him a permanent place in the history of the country. Even the communist critics of Bose who do not approve of his decision to collude with the axis powers during the Second World War have recognized the historical significance of the INA as the indirect catalyst of India's freedom. The historic Red Fort trial of the INA soldiers created a massive popular upsurge, which swept the lengths and breadths of the country like a mighty tidal wave. A spirit of revolt was clearly discernible in the ranks of the British Indian Army, which unnerved the imperialist rulers and expedited the transfer of power.

The military image of Bose as the supreme military commander of the INA has also a certain populistic effect projecting Bose as the symbol of militant resistance against the oppressive British imperialism. His death defying valour and unwavering determination to challenge the British empire in armed confrontation has eternally enthroned him in the hearts of his countrymen. To them, Bose is an icon regarded as the custodian of the honour of a subject race. Some of the daring acts of Bose particularly his dramatic escape from India, his perilous submarine journey from Germany to Japan, and his rendezvous with death on several occasions, have made him a hero in the estimation of his countrymen.

While there is nothing intrinsically wrong in this, a certain balance in our approach is necessary without which, one is sure to be led to serious aberrations and pitfalls of judgement. In the first place, there was an adventurist strain in Bose, but he was not a reckless adventurer. His adventurism was punctuated by rationalism and his decision to leave India

for a final showdown with British imperialism was not the product of momentary impulse. He acted on the basis of his historical sense and on the basis of a firm conviction that something positive would crystallize out of his final plunge into the stormy international stage. Emotion and reason ran parallel in Bose each complementing the other. The idealism of Bose undoubtedly had an emotional content manifested in total and unreserved commitment to the cause of his motherland, but there was also an undercurrent of reason. When he renounced his I.C.S. job, he did not do so in a fit of impulse, but joined the national movement with clear- cut plans and ideas and a vision of the future. This continuity of thought and action extending from Bose's early life right up to the final phase was reflected at every point of his political career. Exaggerated emphasis on the final phase of Bose's life, leads one to view it in isolation from the earlier phase in India. This phase was admittedly less attractive and exciting but by no means less significant. The foundation of Bose's future role as commander of the INA was firmly established in India. Moreover, the glorification of Bose as a military leader tends to overlook the fact that he was also a thinker though not in the conventional sense. He sought to provide the future generation with insights for creative thought. He also pondered deeply over the problem of India's post independence reconstruction. He sought to translate into practice, many of the ideas he had enunciated in India after becoming head of the Provisional Azad Hind Government. Thus the tendency to treat the INA and preINA phases in mutual isolation, blurs the deep underlying unity of the two phases and also precludes the evaluation of Bose as a total and integrated personality. Though the periodisation of the present study focuses on Bose's career in India, it seeks to highlight the integral linkage between the two. They must be studied in conjunction. At the same time it is essential to be conscious of their difference. In the history of the Indian nationalist movement, Bose was the only warrior philosopher. He was a relentless fighter against all forms of injustice and bondage from the very start. His political career in India, did not witness the full flowering of his leadership because he was encumbered by circumstantial constraints and inhibitions. The final phase was the point of culmination where Bose rose to his fullest stature as warrior philosopher. Here he had the benefit of a congenial environment where he could act independently. Constraints of power struggle impeded him no more. However the same qualities he displayed in India, found their unfoldment in the last phase. In a sense, Bose proved a failure in India,

because his idea of an alternative leadership did not succeed. However, his preparation for the future was complete and he developed the requisite dynamism, which stood him in good stead in future. Boses' career in India was thus the real architect of history. History always has definite roots and though the history of Bose's political life in India was replete with failure, it provided him with the surest roots for success in future. In the present study, an attempt has been made to highlight the evolution of Bose to the stature of a warrior philosopher who provided an original and distinctive line of leadership. He has been viewed as a warrior-statesman but not as a warrior-philosopher. Though in the last phase of his career, Bose emerged with the image of a warrior, but there was also an incipient philosophic element in him, which distinguished him from conventional warrior-statesmen. There is a school of thought that believes that Bose would have not lived in history, had he not become Netaji. Another school feels that he would have found his rightful place in history even if he had not left India. The present study contends that this controversy can be easily avoided, if Bose's life is viewed in its totality. Deconstruction of stereotypes and reconstruction of a new image of Bose where the warrior and the philosopher are blended together is the need of the day.

No personality, however forceful, can succeed unaided by his operational environment. Bose was a charismatic leader gifted with enormous potential. However, his quest for an alternative leadership brought him into direct conflict with the Congress High Command. Mahatma Gandhi, who was the undisputed leader of the national movement, could not accept Bose's proposed line of action and in the face of direct and determined opposition from the Congress right wing ; Bose was eliminated from the Congress. There were mistakes and miscalculations on the part of Bose as well as errors of judgment that led to his exit from the Congress. He often did not display the requisite tact and diplomacy while dealing with his opponents and thereby antagonized them. What is noteworthy is that even after his dethronement from the Congress, Bose was never marginalized as a potent political force. As leader of the Forward Bloc he was able to create a sensational impact throughout India making significant dents in some of the noted Gandhian strongholds. While as a mass leader, Gandhi ranked higher than Bose; Bose too demonstrated considerable capacity for mass mobilization in the last phase of his political life in India. It was no mean achievement to make such an impact independently when Gandhi was the sole propelling

force of the freedom movement. Bose always maintained a critical focus in his response to Gandhi and refused to accept any form of leadership as a fait accompli. This was in consonance with his philosophical position, which refused to accept any social and political ideology as the last word. Search for creative alternatives, was central to the thought process of Subhas Chandra Bose. This explains why even his staunchest opponents could not afford to ignore him.

It is significant that except for a brief period of lieutenantship under C.R. Das, Bose had no mentor to guide him in his political life. He was the only Indian leader with the exception of Vithalbhai Patel who dared to think of an alternative to Gandhi. Jawaharlal Nehru, who had the potential and calibre to challenge Gandhi, ultimately surrendered to him leaving Bose lonelier. The Bose-Nehru duo had the prospect and potential to provide a new direction to the left wing movement within the Congress and also an alternative dynamic, radical leadership. Though there is no scope for hypothetical reasoning in history, yet it appears that the Nehru-Bose combination was impregnated with revolutionary possibilities, and was capable of changing the course of the country's history. Why the two fell apart, is therefore a question that deserves in-depth analysis going beyond superficial explanations like personal rivalry.

Bose's conflict with Gandhi also deserves careful evaluation. Gandhi had fundamental differences with Bose, and it was a foregone conclusion that the two would not be able to work together. Bose realized the yawning gulf between himself and Gandhi, but had a kind of exaggerated confidence in his own ability to convert Gandhi to his own line of thinking. On Gandhi's side, there was affection and respect for Bose, and admiration for his patriotism. But Gandhi was irrevocably opposed to the militant brand of leadership represented by Bose. Gandhi's subsequent praise of the INA, should not be interpreted to imply an endorsement of the efficacy of violent struggle, but rather an appreciation of the example of united action transcending all social and religious differences set by the INA. Similarly Bose never accepted nonviolence in the heart of his hearts and had to acquiesce in it under duress. There was no dearth of mutual respect, but that was not sufficient to overcome the insuperable differences over strategies and methods of struggle. Considering the stature of Gandhi as the generalissimo of the national movement, it redounds to the credit of Bose, that he was able to make an impact on his mind and Gandhi could never

underestimate him. There was no personal rivalry in the petty sense, but a clash of personal convictions. The personal element is inescapable in politics, and it would be over simplistic to suggest that the Gandhi- Bose conflict was totally free from the personal dimension. However, there was no desire for self-aggrandizement on either side. What was at stake, was certain principles and divergent interpretations of national interest. The greater interest of the nation superseded narrow personal political ambitions. The fascinating paradox of Gandhi- Bose relations was that, it was essentially a personality clash over principles. It is in this broad perspective, that one must view Gandhi's intransigent attitude towards Bose manifested in his determination to throw him out of the Congress. It is absolutely essential to avoid becoming subjectively inclined. The question whether Gandhi's stand was immoral, becomes irrelevant, the moment one recognizes the fact that he was not averse to resorting to stratagems to eliminate an opponent, if he, in his opinion, posed a danger to the country. A much more pertinent question would be whether it was strategically unwise on the part of Gandhi to defer the struggle proposed by Bose in 1940 and whether his call for Quit India, really came at an opportune moment. An even more incisive question would be whether nonviolence was sufficient by itself to overthrow British imperialism. A proper analysis of Gandhi-Bose relations would depend on the nature of the questions asked rather than subjective predispositions.

From the point of view of Bose, the decision to leave the country was forced by the lack of available options. It was not possible for him to forge a militant alternative to the Congress in India, because even though he commanded considerable mass support, it is not sure whether the whole country would have rallied round him in the supreme moment of reckoning, exalting him over Gandhi. Moreover, the British government was sure to put him behind bars as evident from its decision to arrest all the leaders of the Congress on the eve of the Quit India movement. Judging from his mental makeup, it would have been logical for Bose, to concentrate on an underground violent insurrection right from the beginning. This required the mobilization of the labourforce and peasantry. Bose never had a firm base here, and so long as Gandhi was the motive force of the national movement, it was virtually impossible to supplant his leadership with a new one. Moreover, the revolutionary groups of India lacked coordination and it was a Herculean task to weld them together for concerted action. Bose was undoubtedly able to make an impact as leader of the Congress, but he was

not consistently operative on the national scene, as he had to undergo long terms of internment and exile. Judging from the policy of the British government, it seems almost certain, that they would have immobilized Bose by imprisoning him. Thus under the circumstances, Bose took the most plausible step, though it is an open question, whether he would have attained better results had he left the country earlier when Japan's position in the war, was better. Furthermore, no historical personality, however influential, can succeed without a congenial environment. In India, the complexities of politics circumvented Bose's success. This does not mean that in the INA phase, Bose did not have to contend with any problem, because it was no mean task to achieve what Bose called "Total Mobilization" within such a short time. But he was free from the tangles of political forces, which impeded him at every step in India. In order to appreciate the decision of Bose, in proper perspective, it is thus necessary to take a comprehensive view of his life in India, and trace the sequence of events leading to his departure.

The key to the correct evaluation of any historical personality is a proper comprehension of his basic orientation. Bose was deeply rooted in Indian culture, tradition and ethos. He was nurtured in India's time tested civilizational heritage. While there was a religious element in Bose, expressed in a healthy respect for spiritual values, he was never cast in the mould of a religious revivalist. The secular element was as predominant in him as the spiritual. While he always extolled the spiritual values in which Indian civilization was embedded, he assimilated whatever was worthy of emulation in the western civilization. There is reason to believe that Bose's exile in Europe created an almost metamorphic change in him. Under the influence of Europe, Bose shed some of his inhibitions and conservative fixations. It was in Europe that Bose encountered a permissive and liberal society, where one inhaled the air of freedom. He did not accept this entirely because that would have meant a repudiation of his self. The essential foundations of Bose's orientation were indigenous but in consonance with his philosophical position. Here again he strove for a synthesis, which was actualized in the INA. phase. This vital aspect has not received its due share of emphasis.

Though Bose was predominantly a man of action, he was able to make an original contribution to political thought. He was not a theorist or a system builder and a number of technical and theoretical flaws may be detected in his political philosophy. Elements of ingenuity were interspersed throughout his writings and speeches, which reveal the sharpness of his intellect.

However, another fascinating paradox in the life of Bose was that it was as a man of action, that Bose was able to establish and vindicate the soundness of his theoretical postulations. In him, action and theory complemented each other. His life was an ideal example of how action could translate theory into practice, if it was equipped with a strong theoretical and ideological foundation. While the multiplicity of paradoxes in Bose, may appear baffling, they account for the attractiveness of Bose's message. The essential creativity of Bose, lay in his paradoxical approach to problems followed by paradoxical solutions. Bose demonstrated the validity of his theory not at the intellectual level but at the level of action. This was the secret of his success as warrior-philosopher. No other statesman of India could evolve such a lasting union of theory and action. Bose was impatient but not irrational though one may not agree with his mode of reasoning. He had a fixed goal in view, in the pursuit of which he never wavered or prevaricated. In this itself there was an element of rationalism, which made his actions meaningful and enabled him to validate his theoretical position. In the ultimate analysis, it is advisable to minimize one's subjective predilections while studying Bose, and approach him with an open mind. Historical respect coupled with appreciation of Bose's thought provoking qualities, should take the place of naive eulogy. Bose himself maintained an open mind with respect to all questions, and the same attitude is necessary to understand him in proper perspective.

In the history of India's freedom movement, there were many great nationalists some of whom had the potential to emerge as revolutionary warrior statesmen for instance, Jatin Mukherjee and Surya Sen. Though ultimately they did not succeed, yet their impact cannot be denied. Bose was cast in the same mould. There was an inborn element of militancy in him coupled with a philosophical temperament. Thus in him one finds the juxtaposition of the ebullient activist and the phlegmatic philosopher. Though the term warrior-philosopher is apparently self-contradictory, as philosophers are not meant for the battlefield, yet a philosophic serenity and composure are necessary for success in battles. Warriors can lose their rational sense in moments of adversity. A warrior with a philosophic outlook is however able to maintain his equanimity even in the most trying circumstances. Subhas Chandra Bose displayed self-control to a remarkable degree in the last phase of his career. Even the reverses suffered by the INA, left him unperturbed. When the news of the surrender of Japan reached him in 1945,

which virtually sounded his death-knell, Bose remarked, "Don't you see we are the only people who have not surrendered?" He was no doubt jolted but not downcast and was supremely confident in his declaration that no power under the sun could keep India enslaved for long. He derived his sustaining force from his philosophic orientation rather than any extra-terrestrial source. He was thus both a soldier as well as a philosopher of freedom. In him the apostle of militancy was manifest while the contemplative philosopher was latent. With all his shortcomings, the life of Subhas Chandra Bose remains the most thought provoking. One may criticize him but cannot afford to ignore him. Considering the iconic status of Bose in India, a totally objective evaluation of him may not be easy, but if one is able to shed his predispositions and minimize his subjective predilections he can avoid the pitfalls of petty partisanship. With this background we approach the warrior-philosopher Subhas Chandra Bose.

Chapter - II

Subhas Chandra Bose: The Seed Time (1897-1921)

The political career of Subhas Chandra Bose in India spanned a period of 20 years (1921-41). The seeds of his political ideas and principles were laid in his early life, that is, in the period preceding his entry into active politics. In order to understand his later development, it is necessary to analyse his experiences and the major sources of influence, which shaped his future mode of thinking in this period of time.

Early Impact of Bose's Family:

Bose's family milieu and upbringing had a definite influence on his mental and political evolution and this can be perceived especially in the areas of nationalism and social service, religious orientation and secularism.

From Bose's own testimony, it appears that "politics was tabooed"[1] in his house at Cuttack and further, Orissa where he spent his childhood years, "was a political backwater"[2] unaffected by the currents of politics. Bose's father Janakinath Bose was a Government Pleader and politics being "tabooed" in the house is therefore explicable. However, according to Bose, his father had "all along been very sympathetic to the Indian National Congress. Even during the period when he was Government Pleader, he used to attend Congress sessions regularly and on account of this, he incurred the displeasure of the authorities from time to time. When the Non-cooperation movement started, he tried to help the Congress as far as practicable in its constructive programme. He used all kinds of *Swadeshi* goods and was an all round supporter of *Swadeshi.*[3] Bose's father was thus, a nationalist though of the constructive and covert rather than the revolutionary or overt type. There is no evidence to suggest that he had

any sympathy or support for the revolutionary movement in Bengal, after the partition of Bengal in 1905. He also played a pro-government role occasionally as has been pointed out by Bose's biographer Leonard Gordon, who cites the role of Janakinath Bose in ensuring the passage of the Orissa Tenancy Bill of 1911, in the Bengal Legislative Council, through which, the government wanted to regularize the agrarian code in Orissa. Moreover, he opposed a landholder of Orissa who was critical of the government of Bengal[4]. An inhabitant of Orissa later confessed to Bose that his father had often accused him in criminal cases on behalf of the government, which had made him critical of the Bose family[5]. While it is true that there is no evidence of any kind of protest activity on the part of Janakinath Bose, it is also a fact that he belonged to a time when, in Bose's own words, "politically the country was dead".[6] It must also be noted that he encouraged his sons wholeheartedly when they became active in the freedom struggle. Further, he renounced the title of *Rai Bahadur*, which had been conferred on him in 1912, in protest against the repressive measures of the government in 1930.[7]

The early nationalistic inspiration, which Bose received from his father, was not political in nature but it was socially oriented. From the testimony of Bose and also the noted Sanskrit scholar, Pandit Gouri Nath Shastri, who was close to Bose's family, it is known that Bose's father helped poor students and indigent neighbours in Orissa. He also set up a charitable dispensary and spent a large part of his income for philanthropic purposes.[8] It may be inferred that Bose derived his idea of constructive nationalism from his father. His inclination towards constructive activities for nation building may be attributed to his father's influence and inspiration.

Secondly, Bose belonged to an orthodox Hindu family and his parents believed in traditional Hindu rituals and practices. Bose consequently developed a fascination for Hindu festivals like the *Durga Puja,* as evident from an undated letter written by him from Cuttack to his mother sometime around 1912-13 where he wrote, "This year I have been denied the fulfilment that comes through the *Darshan* of the goddess Durga, the Queen of the three realms, our saviour from all misfortune, and protector from all evil, the mother of the universe. . . and all my five senses remain unsatisfied." Leonard Gordon has remarked that Bose imbibed the fascination for mother worship from his mother.[9] Bose maintained a religious attitude right through his political life. During his imprisonment at Mandalaya, he arranged for the celebration of *Durga Puja* in the prison. In a letter to Basanti Devi dated

September 25, 1925, he said, "The Divine Mother is being worshipped today in many a Bengali home. We are fortunate enough to have her in this prison also".[10]

In this connection it may be observed that Bose later made goddess worship an integral part of his philosophy of nationalism likening the nation to the mother goddess. In a letter to Hemendra Nath Dasgupta on February 20, 1926, he cited the illustration of mother worship in the works of eminent Bengali literary figures like Bankim Chandra Chatterji's "Bande Mataram", Tagore's song, "Oh my motherland, let me lay my head at thy feet", and Dwijendralal Roy's famous lyric, "When that Mother India emerged out of the blue waters of the sea".[11] According to Dr.Shobhonlal Mukherjee, an eminent scholar, Bose imbibed Bankim Chandra's conception of *Bharatmata* visualizing the country as a goddess and also by Aurobindo Ghosh's conception of spiritual nationalism.[12]

It was also perhaps because of the values imbibed from his family background that he was later unable to accept the Marxian theory, which was essentially atheistic, in its entirety. Bose himself has testified that his father had a deep faith in God.[13] Significantly, while Bose proved to be rebellious in his early life, he never questioned the existence of God. He advocated a progressive and rationalistic approach to religion, but was against reactionary practices enshrined in institutions like the caste system.[14] There was an incipient element of modernism even in his traditionalism because along with his faith in God, Bose was acutely conscious of the objective reality, that is, the sufferings of his countrymen, which he wanted to ameliorate.[15]

Although Bose's parents subscribed to orthodox Hindu religious rituals and practices, they encouraged a non-communal outlook in him. He has written in his autobiography : "My mental attitude towards Muslims in general, was largely though unconsciously influenced by my early contacts. The quarter, in which we lived, was a predominantly Muslim one and our neighbours were mostly Muslims. They all looked up to father as ordinary villagers do to a patriarch. We took part in their festivals like the *Moharrum* for instance. At school, I had Muslim teachers and Muslim classmates with whom my relations were perfectly cordial. In fact I cannot remember ever to have looked upon Muslims as different from ourselves in any way except that they go to pray in a mosque. And friction or conflict between Hindus and Muslims was unknown in my early days."[16] Thus it appears that Bose's

family taught him to be religious minded without being disrespectful towards other religions.

Considering the overall impact of Bose's family background, a pertinent question, which arises is, whether Bose was able to transcend the class character of his family. According to one viewpoint, Bose was the representative of a particular class, namely, the *Bhadralok* class implying the educated upper middle class which shunned manual labour and looked down upon people belonging to lower classes commonly characterized as *Chotoloks*.[17] The adherents of this viewpoint hold that Bose belonged to a particular class and his role must be judged in the context of this class, that is the educated middle class elements who were romantic nationalists and revolutionaries. He did not, therefore, have any real mass base and his acceptability was confined to the urban middle class. Dr. Chittabrata Palit has expressed the view that Bose could not transcend his class limitations. Haripada Chowdhury, a veteran revolutionary of the Jugantar group has commented that Bose never had to put up with starvation and poverty and was essentially a romantic type who could afford to express romantic ideas. Dr. Rakhahari Chatterji has remarked in the same vein that one of the main reasons behind Bose's failure to take a stronger stand in favour of working class interests was his inability to outdo his class background and training.[18]

An opposite view is that Bose was able to rise above the interests of his class and that it is wrong to judge him from any class angle. In a personal interview on June 21, 1999, Calcutta, Prof. Prasanta Kumar Ghosh observed that Bose was able to transcend his immediate sectional interests and was no romantic revolutionary as he had a concrete plan in his mind. In between these two views, there is a moderate view, which places Bose in the category of the national, bourgeoisie, which arose through a struggle against foreign capitalism unlike the comprador class, which was an agent of foreign capital. His class background stood in the way of his emergence as a leader of the labour and peasant movements, though he identified himself with the labourclass and the peasantry. Prof. Suniti Kumar Ghosh expressed this view in a personal interview on March 29, 1998.

Taking into consideration these three viewpoints, it may be observed that Bose made a conscious effort to transcend his class background in his early life. To cite three specific examples, Bose wrote in an undated letter to his mother from Cuttack, "In this current age, God has created something new. This new creation is the *Babu*. We belong to this community of *Babu*;

God has given us a pair of legs, that we are unable to walk 40/45 minutes, because we are *Babus*. We possess a pair of precious hands, but. . . we do not make proper use of our hands because we are *Babus*. . . in fact we are animals in the garb of humans, devoid of all human attributes."[19] This scathing attack on *Babu* culture indicates that Bose had developed a revulsion against the wealthy aristocratic class, which despised manual labour. This may be attributed to Bose's family influence because he himself notes that servants were treated with respect in his family and his family environment broadened his mind.[20]

Secondly, from the testimony of Bose's close friend Hementa Kumar Sarkar, it is known that, once when Bose was returning from Murshidabad to Krishnanagar by boat, he took up the oar along with his friends despite great physical strain.[21] Bose was, thus, not averse to manual labour which was in striking contrast to the spirit of the *Bhadralok* class.

Thirdly, in an undated letter to Hemanta Sarkar, in 1917, Bose wrote, "I was not born in a poor family. This is indeed true, but am I responsible for that? What penance do I have to do on that account?"[22] It is clear from this that, while Bose did not deny his class background, he did not feel any sense of pride in it.

While it is true that, Bose did not entirely transcend his class limitations during his political life in India, but in the Indian National Army (INA) phase, he abolished all caste and class differences in the INA. Bose's family background made a positive contribution in this respect because it did not encourage any kind of exploitative attitude and had a philanthropic tradition.

Bose's INA had no class character. A broad stratum of people, the lower classes in particular, figured prominently in it. Captain Laxmi Sehgal of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment has quoted Bose as saying that, workers from tin mines needed to be recruited to the INA. because it was they rather than the middle classes who would save the country. Captain laxmi Sehgal of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment of the INA, also observes that in the INA application form, there was no column on caste.[23]

Bose himself did not subscribe to the idea that a person belonging to the aristocratic class could not be a nationalist. His friend Dilip Kumar Roy has quoted him as saying that, all over the world, the "aristocratic middle class" had come forward to uplift the poor. Without initial leadership from the bourgeoisie, the proletariat could not be aroused.[24] Bose was able to free the INA from class barriers because he himself had largely transcended the limitations of his class background by the final stage of his career.

Bose's student life partly complemented the role of his family in his formative years, but it had a dual aspect because in this period he occasionally rebelled against his family.

Contribution of Bose's Student Life to His Future Career :

Bose's student life was extremely significant from the point of view of his political evolution. He first joined the Protestant European School in 1902. In 1909, he entered the Ravenshaw Collegiate School from where he passed his Matriculation Examination in 1913. The period between 1902 and 1913 may be classified as the first phase of Bose's student life during which he developed a sense of mission and purpose in life, imbibed certain moral values and also made his mark for the first time as a student leader, Bose participated in a students' movement.

The First Phase: 1902-13:

Bose entered the Protestant 'European' School when he was barely five years old. Here he got a foretaste of the undercurrent of racism, which was one of the major characteristics of British rule. Unlike Anglo Indian students, the Indian students were not allowed to join the volunteer corps. It naturally created the impression that Indians were different though they belonged to the same institution.[25] It may be inferred, that the school authorities were apprehensive that military training may create a rebellious attitude against British imperialism in young students. However, Bose was too young at the time to view the matter in its political perspective.

The school authorities made a deliberate and conscious effort to suppress and circumvent any kind of nationalistic feeling among young students. In July 1905, the partition of Bengal was announced by Lord Curzon[26]. It triggered off a massive protest movement in Bengal that broke away from its traditional moderate moorings and developed new and militant techniques-like *swadeshi* and boycott, implying self-reliance and the boycott of foreign goods and burning of foreign cloth in particular. Moreover, there was an outburst of revolutionary activities particularly from the younger sections of society. In 1908, two Bengali youths, Khsudiram Bose and Prafulla

Chaki made an attempt on the life of Mr. Kingsford, the District Magistrate of Muzzaffarpur, but killed two European ladies by mistake. According to Bose's testimony, the headmistress of the school condemned the act before the students in class.[27]

The school curriculum, as Bose noted, hardly catered to the needs of Indian students, and was designed to make the Indians as English as possible in their mental make up. Thus, much was taught about the geography and history of Great Britain but India remained ignored.[28] Consequently, Bose's nationalistic bent received no impetus at the Protestant European School.

Bose encountered a totally different environment at Ravenshaw Collegiate School. The atmosphere was rooted in native traditions. It was here that Bose developed a nationalistic spirit under the influence of his headmaster, Benimadhav Das. The headmaster had connections with revolutionaries and two of his daughters, Bina Das and Kalyani Das, distinguished themselves later as revolutionaries. While there is no evidence to show that Benimadhav Das directly inculcated revolutionary ideas among students, he took particular care to ensure that they developed a sense of commitment to the cause of their motherland. Emphasis was laid on the teaching of Indian history. The history of the world was also taught with particular reference to European revolutionaries like Mazzini and Garibaldi. In a personal interview on October 25, 1997, Subrata Bose, nephew of Bose, opined that, it was Benimadhab Das who played a significant role in broadening the mind of young Bose. It was Benimadhav Das who made him politically conscious and introduced him to Hemanta Kumar Sarkar who was close to revolutionaries. It was under Das's influence that, Bose came to know about liberation struggles of different countries.

Bose himself has nowhere mentioned that his headmaster influenced him politically although he "felt an irresistible moral appeal in his personality." According to Bose, "Before he left us, he had succeeded in sowing in me, a vague perception of moral values, an inchoate feeling that in human life, moral values count more than anything else."[29] Thus, Bose considered himself indebted to his headmaster not in a strictly political sense but because of his contribution in building his character. It may be argued that Benimadhav Das wanted to infuse a nationalistic fervour in his students without resorting to direct political indoctrination and assigned priority to character building without which participation in politics would be meaningless. His daughter Bina Das has written that "man-making" was her father's mission of life.

Though he did not jump into politics, every fibre of his being was animated with patriotism.[30] The circumstances leading to his transfer from Ravenshaw Collegiate School confirm this view.

On August 11, 1910, the students of Ravenshaw Collegiate School organized a meeting in the memory of Khsudirm Bose at the instance of Benimadhav Das. Bose delivered a short speech before his classmates paying tribute to Khsudiram Bose and also highlighting the policy of repression of the British government.[31] This was followed by a cultural function where Bose took the lead and delivered a speech on the ways in which the condition of the country could be improved.[32] Benimadhav Das was actively associated with the function and whole-heartedly supported the decision of the students to observe a fast in the memory of the Bengali martyr. Benimadhav Das inspired his students to sing the song *Banga Amar Janani amar*, composed by Dwijendra Lal Roy, which was proscribed by the government. Immediately afterwards, he was transferred to Krishnanagar Collegiate School as the authorities apprehended that he was disseminating revolutionary ideas among his students. Bose initially contemplated a student's strike for the revocation of the transfer order but was dissuaded by Das.[33]

After the departure of Benimadhav Das, a controversy was created over the directive of the government proscribing the book *Desher Katha* by Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar. The only book, which the students were permitted to read, was A.N. Ghosh's *England's Work in India*, which was laudatory of the British. The students had, under the influence of Benimadhav Das, developed a fascination for history written from the nationalistic rather than the imperialistic viewpoint. At the instance of Bose and Charu Chandra Ganguly, the students began to read Deuskar's book secretly in defiance of the government order. Penal action was contemplated against Bose and Ganguly but Bose organized a protest movement uniting all Bengali students with the result that the government did not pursue the case further.[34] This was the first occasion where Bose participated in a protest movement.

In 1913, Bose passed the Matriculation Examination standing second in the list of candidates. His parents decided to send him to Calcutta to compete for the Intermediate Examination from Presidency College. One reason for this was that Bose had become rebellious in his attitude towards his family. In his own words, "I was rapidly changing and was no longer the goody goody boy afraid of displeasing his parents".[35] His parents thought that a change of environment might restore him to normalcy.

The changes in Bose were partly due to the impact of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna. Thus Before focusing attention on the second phase of Bose's student life, it is necessary to take a brief look at the way in which he was influenced by Vivekananda and Ramakrishna in the first phase of his student life.

Role of Vivekananda in the Life of Bose :

The significance of Vivekananda in the life of Bose manifested itself in the following ways:

It created a lasting personal impression
It fanned the spirit of nationalism in Bose,
It laid the foundations for his socialistic ideas, and
It shaped his philosophy of education.

Vivekananda as Catalyst for Transformation in Bose:

Bose's first exposure to the writings of Vivekananda brought about a radical change in his way of thinking. According to Bose, "I had hardly turned over a few pages when I realized that here was something that I was looking for. I was thrilled to the marrow of my bones. My headmaster had roused my aesthetic and moral sense, had given me a new impetus in life, but he had not given me an ideal to which I could given my whole being that Vivekananda gave me."[36] He added further, "I was barely fifteen when Vivekananda entered my life. Then there followed a revolution within and everything was turned upside down."[37] Vivekananda imparted a sense of mission and purpose to Bose's life. Bose encountered Vivekananda when he was passing through a mental and spiritual crisis and in his own words, required "a central principle".[38] Bose found in him, a satisfactory solution to many questions, which had cropped up in his youthful mind.[39] He has also stated that after he received his first exposure to Vivekananda, his former headmaster Benimadhav Das ceased to be his ideal and he accepted Vivekananda's path as his ideal.[40]

In this connection, a comparative estimate of the respective patterns of influence exercised on Bose, by Benimadhav Das and Vivekananda, may be attempted. Bose came into contact with Das before he came across the

works of Vivekananda. Das played a significant role in his character formation. From the testimony of his son, Bimal Chandra Das, it is known that he constantly exhorted Bose to become a man in the true sense of the term.[41] Bose's childhood companion, Subodh Chandra Ganguly also notes that, initially Bose aspired to become an Advocate General like his maternal uncle Sir B.C. Mitra, but after coming into contact with Benimadhav Das, he gave up the idea. He, in fact, received his first initiation in nationalism from Benimadhav Das.[42] In his autobiography, Bose has written that in his early childhood when he was a student of the Protestant European School, he used to hear mentioned in his family circle that the highest position one could get was, in the Indian Civil Service. In school, he once wrote an essay expressing his desire to become a magistrate.[43]

After joining Ravenshaw Collegiate School, his mentality underwent a radical change and this is evident in his undated letters to his mother from Cuttack between 1912-13. In one letter he wrote, "I do not know if you will be happiest if we grow up to be judges, magistrates, barristers or high placed officials or if we come to be admired for wealth and fortune by the men of the world. . . or if we earn the respect of the learned and the virtuous for having grown up to be real men even though we may be poor".[44] This was a radical reversal of his earlier position. It may be questioned whether this change should be attributed to the influence of Vivekananda or Benimadhav Das. On the basis of available evidence, both appear to have made their contributions because Bose had already begun to develop a nationalistic bent and a spirit of pride in his native heritage under the influence of Benimadhav Das. Vivekananda's impact on him essentially signified an extension, articulation and deepening of the influence of his headmaster. Thus, the roles played by Vivekananda and Benimadhav Das in the life of Bose, were complementary. Though from Bose's own testimony, it appears that the impact of Vivekananda was of a more revolutionary nature, yet it must be noted that the influence of Benimadhav Das enabled him to grasp Vivekananda's teachings in a proper perspective. One of Bose's biographers is of the opinion that both inspired in Bose, an immediate conversion.[45] Without belittling the influence of Vivekananda, it may be said that Benimadhav Das rather than Vivekananda should be accredited with the "immediate conversion" of Bose. Vivekananda revolutionized his life but did not convert him. However, in terms of overall impact, Vivekananda's role in shaping his mental make up was of the greatest significance. Prof. Samar Guha interprets Bose's observation that Vivekananda

'entered' his life, to imply that Bose's entire self was pervaded by and permeated with Vivekananda's spirit. Prof. Sankari Prasad Basu has commented that Vivekananda set Bose's mind afire.[46] In a personal interview on March29, 1998, Uma Devi, the Sri Sangha activist, said that Bose imbibed the message of Vivekananda with his heart and soul and Vivekannda encompassed his life and self.

Vivekananda and the Spirit of Nationalism :

The nationalistic inspiration, which Bose derived from his readings of Vivekananda, was not political though it had an indirect political dimension. He also read a book on Vivekananda by Sister Nivedita, *The Master As I Saw Him*, which was one of his favourite books.[47] In a footnote to his autobiography, he quoted Nivedita's observation about Vivekananda, "The queen of adoration was his motherland. There was no cry within her shores that did not find in him, a responsive echo".[48]

Leonard Gordon is of the opinion that Bose's undated letters to his mother from Cuttack "echo the vision of Vivekananda who decried the fallen state of India and propounded the need for selfless service to the motherland".[49] A perceptive examination of the contents of Bose's letters to his mother conveys the impression that while he did not mention Vivekananda's name even once, he expressed thoughts strikingly similar to those of Vivekananda. Moreover, since the letters were written around 1912-13, when Bose was about 15 years old and he himself has testified that he came across Vivekananda's writings at the age, it is plausible that his letters to his mother bore the mark of Vivekananda's direct influence.

In one letter, he wrote, "Mother how much longer shall we sleep? Shall we continue to turn a deaf ear to the wailings of our nation?"[50] This may be attributed to the exhortation of Vivekananda, "Feel my children feel; feel for the poor, the ignorant, the downtrodden, feel till the heart stops, the brain reels and you think you will go mad."[51] In another letter, he referred to the degradation of India saying that India, which was God's beloved nation, had lost her religion and also her national life and become a weak, servile and cursed nation.[52] The fact that this was not written in a fit of momentary impulse is clear from some of his other letters to his mother. For example, he wrote in one letter. "How holy and eternal the Hindu religion was and

how degraded our religion is now. Look how atheism, lack of faith and bigotry have become rampant, leading to so much sin and misery for the people."[53]

In these letters, nostalgic attraction for the ancient Hindu religion along with a tone of self-criticism can be discerned. This may be the outcome of Vivekananda's influence because Vivekananda while glorifying Hinduism also emphasized on its vulgarization. Vivekananda was a vocal critic of social discriminations, religious dogmas and all forms of exploitation in the name of religion. For instance, he remarked that "Priestcraft is the bane of India"[54] and further, 'What are the Brahmins doing for the downtrodden masses of India? How mean and degraded has our eternal religion become at their hand.[55] Bose noted in the same vein, "Look at the holy Brahmin of our olden days and the hypocritical Brahmin of the present time. Now, wherever religion is practised, there is so much bigotry and sin."[56] Bose's critical focus in his response to Hinduism despite his historical respect for it, may be attributed to the impact of Vivekananda.

Bose's letters to his mother are indicative of a restless soul motivated by an urge to render positive service to his country. They further reveal that Bose was cast in a mould different from others in the sense that he was serious, sensitive and introspective for his age. Vivekananda's writings may have triggered a consciousness in him about the plight of his country, which later inspired him to lead a life of service, and sacrifice for the cause of his motherland. He was, in this sense, different from the average youth to whom life was intended for the pursuit of personal success and satisfaction. Bose himself has stated in his autobiography, "Looking back on my school days, I have no doubt that I must have appeared to others as wayward, eccentric and obstinate."[57] Under the influence of Vivekananda, Bose subordinated his personal interests to the greater interest of his motherland.

While Bose developed a patriotic mentality, he was still not politically articulate. He has himself stated, "as long as I was in school, I did not mature politically."[58] There is no evidence in his letters to his mother to suggest that he was thinking in terms of the political freedom of his country, at that point of time. There is also no proof that Vivekananda's writings had any direct political influence on his youthful mind. In this connection, it may be pointed out that Vivekananda initially had political inclinations and contemplated an armed upsurge against British imperialism with the help of the native princes. However, he eventually realized that the country was not

prepared for armed revolution and devoted his energies to constructive national work.[59] According to the renowned scholar, R.K.Dasgupta, "Vivekananda was not interested in politics and far less in political doctrines. He did not believe that his country's salvation lay in politics."[60] Further, "he rejected politics as an instrument of national or human improvement and this involved a rejection of the whole idea of a political revolution for a social change."[61] Vivekananda's own averment, "I will have nothing to do with political nonsense. I do not believe in any politics",[62] appears to support this view. However, he was not oblivious of the urgency of India's political freedom as evident from his remark before the famous revolutionary, Hemchandra Ghosh, at Dhaka on April 13, 1901, "India must be freed politically first and you must do this by any means whatsoever."[63]

There is no evidence to suggest that Bose was aware of Vivekananda's political views at least in his early life. Thus, the initial impact of Vivekananda was to incline his mind more towards society than the state. Bose has himself stated that he was inspired by Vivekananda's ideal of service for humanity, which included the service of ones' own country, and also his call to serve the poor, which he viewed as service to God.[64] From Bose's letters to his mother it is evident that he was thinking more in terms of social service and this may be attributed to the basic message implicit in Vivekananda's teachings that if the society disintegrates, the state would not last, since society is the foundation of the state and its sustaining force. In his later life of political activity, Bose assigned topmost priority to political freedom but he simultaneously emphasized the need to eradicate social injustices. Thus, the early influence of Vivekananda continued to manifest itself in Bose's consistent emphasis on the betterment of society.

Whether Vivekananda influenced Bose's concept of political revolution in his later life, cannot be affirmed. However, Vivekananda's advocacy of strength and fearlessness which Bose has noted in his autobiography,[65] may have inspired him in his determination to fight British imperialism. Still, from the available source material the extent of Vivekananda's direct influence on Bose's future political life remains unclear. There is no first hand proof to suggest that he was aware of Vivekananda's political views, though it may be surmised that Hemchandra Ghosh who was close to Bose, informed him about Vivekananda's aspiration for India's political freedom. Bose has nowhere expressed this categorically, but he has acknowledged that, "Though the Swami never gave any political message, everyone who came into contact

with him, developed a political mentality".[66] Bose owed his concept of constructive nationalism through social service, to Vivekananda. It was also under Vivekananda's influence, that Bose began to develop his philosophy of education, which was an integral part of his concept of nationalism.

Vivekananda and the Philosophy of Education :

Ever since his childhood, Bose thought deeply about the meaning and purpose of education. Even after he joined the political movement, he evinced keen interest in education and was entrusted with the charge of the Bengal National College by his mentor C.R.Das though his political activity did not leave him much time and opportunity to associate himself actively in this area. Bose's thoughts on education may be classified into two parts : 1) philosophical and idealistic, and 2) practical and operational. While Bose developed his career, the origins of the idealistic aspect may be traced back to his early life and attributed to the direct influence of Vivekananda.

From Bose's thoughts expressed in his letters to his mother, it appears that he endorsed Vivekananda's emphasis on character building and man-making as the aim of education. In one of his letters, he wrote, "We are now being educated; if the aim is mere jobs and money, how can we be worthy of the education and of our manhood?"[67]-Elaborating his thoughts in another undated letter written from Ranchi, in 1913, he wrote, "I have come to realize that pursuit of studies is not the highest goal of the student, students feel that by securing a stamp from the University, they achieve their mission, but if one fails to acquire real knowledge in spite of obtaining this stamp from the University, I say I hate this sort of education. To build his character, is the student's primary duty."[68] This may be attributed to the direct inspiration of Vivekananda's view that, "We must have life-building, man making, character-making assimilation of ideas."[69] Later, when Bose became actively associated with student's movements, he exhorted the students in almost identical language. In a written address sent to the Students Conference of the Surma Valley, in May 1929, Bose made it clear that by obtaining some gold medals by passing examinations, one could at best secure some good job but never attain manhood in the true sense of the term. He also decried bookish knowledge as the sole end of education.[70] It is interesting to note that a recurrent theme in Bose's letters to his mother

was his view of bookish knowledge as a "worthless commodity of very little significance."[71]

Thus, the roots of his various ideas can be traced to his early years. Inspired by Vivekananda, Bose came to the conclusion that the aim of education was not to amass wealth. At this point of time, Bose was not acquainted with communist literature and had not been exposed to the writings of Karl Marx. However, he developed an aversion towards money as exemplified in his letter to his mother from Ranchi saying, "I abhor money, as money is at the root of all evil."[72] The origins of Bose's socialistic ideas may thus be traced back to the time when Vivekananda had fascinated him.

Vivekananda and Bose's socialistic ideas

Bose in his political career was a confirmed believer in socialistic ideals though he did not subscribe to the doctrine of Marxism. His views on socialism were rooted in Indian history, culture and tradition. His outlook was shaped in his early life and the core of his socialist thought was derived from Vivekananda. Vivekananda was not a doctrinaire socialist and there is no reference to Marxian theory anywhere in his writings. He did not envisage a theoretical approach to socialism but declared, "I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread."[73] The main thrust of his ideas, was mass uplift through the amelioration of poverty. There was a fundamental contradiction between Vivekananda's concept of socialism and Marxian communism because Vivekananda did not subscribe to the atheistic character of communism and his basic orientation was spiritual. Bose, like Vivekananda, had great faith in God and at the same time, was committed to the cause of the exploited masses. In his autobiography, he has quoted Vivekananda's fervent call, "Say brothers at the top of your voice, the naked Indian, the Pariah Indian is my brother."[74] He has also referred to his prophecy that, "the Brahmin, the Kshatriya and the Vaishya, each had had their day and now came the turn of the Sudras, the down trodden masses."[75] The noted scholar, Sankari Prasad Basu, has correctly stated that Bose did not initially realize the sociological significance of the sayings of Vivekananda but accepted them as a glowing manifestation of his love for humanity.[76] It may be observed that as Bose developed

intellectually, he came to realize the deeper sociological significance of Vivekananda's thoughts on socialism. In a letter to his friend Charu Chandra Ganguly from Cambridge on March 23, 1920, he said,

> I have been feeling that in our country, two things are especially needed- (1) spread of education among the common people, (2) labour movement. Swami Vivekananda used to say that India's progress will (sic) be achieved only by the peasant, the washer man, the cobbler and the sweeper. These words are very true. The Western world has demonstrated what the power of the people can accomplish. The brightest example of this is the first Socialist republic in the world, that is Russia. If India will ever rise again, that will come through the power of the people.[77]

Quoting from Vivekananda's book *Bartaman Bharat*, he said that the days of capitalists and industrialists were numbered and the progress of India would be brought about by the strength and sacrifice of the *Sudras* or the labour class. Mass education and labour organization were India's foremost requirements.[78]

Bose expressed such ideas when he went to England to compete for the I.C.S. Examination. He had reached an intellectual maturity by that time and had become acquainted with the works of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky. However, the early impact of Vivekananda on his youthful mind was so great that he did not endorse the Marxian approach though he might have had a certain historical respect for it. Thus, at the Rangpur Political Conference of March 30, 1929, he referred to Vivekananda's words, "Let a new India emerge through the workshop and from the huts and bazaars", and commented, "his socialism did not derive its birth from the books of Karl Marx. It had its origin in the thought and culture of India."[79]

Vivekananda's main emphasise was on equality. Bose developed a rebellious attitude against the prevailing iniquitous social system and a commitment to the cause of an egalitarian social order. He has related in his autobiography how he was moved by the spectacle of an old woman who used to sit in front of his house in Calcutta begging for alms. Her sorrowful conditions made Bose think of himself as a criminal who had no right to live in comfort when the poor woman had no roof over her head. He often remitted his transport expenses for alleviating the sufferings of the beggar woman.[80] This may be attributed to the influence of Vivekananda. In his later

political life too, social and economic equality was a recurrent theme in most of his speeches. When he developed his own theory of socialism in his book, *The Indian Struggle* (1934-5), he named it *Samyavada.* Equality or *Samya* was central to it. It may be inferred that the roots of his philosophy of *Samyavada* lay in his early life when Vivekananda's writings instilled, a firm conviction about the need for equality in him. According to Uma Devi, an activist of the Sri Sangha Group, Bose was first a *samyavadi* and then a *samajvadi* or socialist. Prabhangshu Shekhar Pal of the Bengal Volunteers group, who murdered Robert Douglas, District Magistrate of Midnapore, also feels that Bose simply thought of a social system where all lived in happiness and enjoyed food and clothing. His concept of complete freedom, implied freedom from all kinds of bondage. In a speech at the Central Province and Berar Students Conference on December 1, 1929, at Amraoti, Bose said, "freedom for the whole of society will mean freedom for woman as well as for man, freedom for the depressed classes and not merely for the rich."[81] He clarified that social barriers between castes should be demolished; inequalities of wealth should be removed and equal opportunities for education given to all.[82] It was this egalitarian outlook, which broadened into the doctrine of *Samyavada.*

Moreover, Bose responded to socialism in a spirit of humanism, which entailed love, and this too, was partly the result of his reading of Vivekananda's works. According to Bose's own testimony, he became liberal with beggars, *fakirs* and *sadhus* and derived satisfaction from helping them.[83] He also undertook village reconstruction work in Orissa and even after he joined Presidency College, Calcutta, he devoted himself to social work whenever he returned to Orissa during holidays. For instance, he energetically took to nursing cholera patients. Bose's classmate Khagendra Nath Mitra has testified that he had nursed victims of the epidemic at Dolmondai in Orissa.[84] According to the former Vice Chancellor of Vishwa Bharati University, Dr. Nemai Sadhan Bose, social service was central to Bose's discovery of India, which compared favourably with Vivekananda's pilgrimage traversing the lengths and breadths of the country in order to discover it.[85]

Bose never undertook extensive travels like Vivekananda though he once left his home in search of a *guru* and visited places like Hardwar, Benares, Mathura, etc. His travels unraveled many truths and realities about Indian society. However, even within a limited sphere, he attempted his own discovery of India and it infused in him a profound spirit of love for the

suffering masses. From the testimony of Bose's classmate, Brindaban Bihari Palit, it is known that Bose used to exhort others as well to undertake social service.[86] This humanitarian spirit was reflected later in Bose's activities as a zealous flood relief worker in North Bengal. It would be worthwhile to examine the extent to which Vivekananda's mentor Ramakrishna influenced Bose.

Impact of Sri Ramkrishna on Bose:

From the available source material, it appears that Bose had respect for Ramakrishna but considered Vivekananda's influence to be more powerful and pervasive. Leonard Gardon testifies that Bose's father was an admirer of Ramakrishna. Bose may have known about Ramakrishna in his childhood, but he evidently made an in-depth analysis of his teachings after reading Vivekananda.[87] To him, Ramakrishna's teachings contained valuable practical directions regarding character building and spiritual uplift. According to Ramakrishna, only through renunciation, realization and self-abnegation, was spiritual development possible. Bose however, did not find anything new in his teaching and considered these to be essentially a restatement of the *Upanishads*, which had advocated renunciation of worldly desires as the key to the attainment of immortality.[88] But he did acknowledge that, "the effectiveness of Ramakrishna's appeal lay in the fact that he had practised what he preached and reached the acme of spiritual progress."[89]

Comparing Bose's reactions to Vivekananda and Ramakrishna, it appears that Ramakrishna did not create the kind of revolutionary impact that Vivekananda did. However, he was instrumental in intensifying Bose's spiritual cravings. Bose's statement in his letter to his mother that, "I do not want to reason, because I am utterly ignorant. I must therefore have only faith, unquestioning faith in the existence of the Lord",[90] appears to be a reiteration of Ramakrishna's message that "to know God, was true knowledge, and the rest was ignorance."[91] Bose's aversion to money also reflects Ramakrishna's teaching that acquisition of wealth could never be the object of life.[92] Bose was also inspired by Ramakrishna's message of communal harmony and his belief that all religious paths led to the same goal.[93] This is evident from Bose's speech at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Rangpur where he referred to Ramakrishna's ideal of synthesis of

religions.[94] At the Hooghly District Students Conference on July 12, 1929, he said that Ramakrishna's ideal of synthesis was the foundation of Indian nationalism because it was impossible to create the edifice of nationalism in a country like India with wide diversities without an ideal which preached tolerance of all religions.[95] A recent scholar Kanailal Basu has traced a direct connection between the early influence of Ramakrishna on Bose and his success in creating communal unity in the INA According to him, the slogan "Jai Hind" invented by Bose, was totally free from communal overtones and was the practical manifestation of Ramakrishna's message that there are as many paths as there are views. The roots of the INA may be found in the message of Ramakrishna and it represented it in the political sphere in a clear and concrete form.[96] It, therefore, appears that Bose's appeal for unity in diversity drew its strength and inspiration from Ramakrishna.

According to Bose's friend Dilip Kumar Roy, Bose, had once remarked during a private conversation, "I do not want to be irreverent towards Ramakrishna, but I admire more, his modern disciple Vivekananda."[97]According to the late Swami Lokeshwarananda, Bose never denigrated Ramakrishna because he knew that it was Ramakrishna who moulded Vivekananda. Two possible explanations may be offered regarding his preference for Vivekananda. Firstly, while Bose was of a spiritual bent of mind, he ultimately decided to dedicate himself to the struggle for freedom. Ramakrishna's teachings emphasized the renunciation of material desires but did not contain anything, which could serve as an inspiration for the political movement against British imperialism. Ramakrishna was predominantly a spiritual person while Bose was essentially a political personality with spiritual inclinations. While he may not have found any direct political message, in Vivekananada's writings, yet certain elements in his teachings did inspire many who were actively involved in the freedom movement. For instance, Sister Nivedita has quoted Vivekananda as saying that, "Only the coward would turn the other cheek."[98] The same idea was expressed in Vivekananda's work, *Prachya O Paschatya,* which Bose read (as evident form a letter to Haricharan Bagchi from Mandalaya).[99] Vivekananda made it clear that if a person were slapped, he would be committing a sin if he did not return ten slaps in retaliation. He also regretted the fact that the descendants of Jesus Christ had become worshippers of power while Indians, who inherited the legacy of Lord Krishna, were following Christ's message of nonviolence.[100]

A parallel may be drawn here with Bose. In *The Indian Struggle,* Bose

all attributed India's downfall in the material and political sphere to her "inordinate belief in fate and the supernatural, the peaceful contentment engendered by adherence to *Ahimsa* carried to absurd lengths."[101] This was perhaps inspired by Vivekananda's criticism of the otherworldly attitude of the Indians and their tendency to think in terms of death.[102] It should be noted that while adhering to nonviolent direct action during his political career in India, he never accepted non-violence as infallible.

In the second place, Bose was a devotee of Goddess Kali and an adherent of *shaktivada*. Here, both Ramakrishna and Vivekananda influenced him though the influence of the latter was greater. In a letter to his friend, Hemanta Kumar Sarkar, dated October 3, 1914, he wrote, "A vision rises before my eyes. It is the Kali temple at Dakshineswar. In front of me I see Kali the mother, sabre in hand, poised on the seat of Shiva.... Facing her is a boy more childlike in his age, sobbing and appealing to somebody in his yet indistinct words, 'O Mother, accept my offering, what is good as well as what is bad'... The boy is Ramakrishna."[103] In his early life, when Bose had spiritual cravings, this image of the goddess appealed to him. However, when he entered political life, he was attracted to the image of the goddess as the embodiment of power of *mahashakti*. From the testimony of Bose's close comrade, Narendra Narayan Chakravarti, it is known that Bose considered mother worship as an inspiration for Bengal nationalism,[104] and endorsed the view of Valentine Chirol that Kali was the political war cry of Indian nationalism.[105]

In this connection, it may be noted that Vivekananda's conception of mother-worship was different from that of Ramakrishna. Sister Nivedita quotes Vivekananda as saying, "I worship the terrible. Let us worship the terror for its own sake."[106] According to Nivedita, Vivekananda's effort was to banish fear and weakness from his own consciousness and to learn to recognize the mother as instinctively in evil, terror, and annihilation as in that which makes for sweetness and joy.[107] His thoughts were embodied in a poem entitled *Kali The Mother*, which according to the testimony of Dilip Kumar Roy, was a great favourite of Bose. Dr. Satish Chandra Maikap draws a parallel between Vivekananda and Bose and attributes Bose's martial spirit to the influence of Goddess Kali who occupied an important place in the life of Vivekananda. The essence of his poem *Kali the Mother* was manifested in Bose's life and work.[108] Significantly, when Bose joined the political movement, he developed a close affinity with the revolutionaries of Bengal,

to whom the image of Kali as the goddess of power was more appealing. Bimal Dasgupta, the veteran revolutionary of the Bengal Volunteers Group who murdered District Magistrate James Peddie of Midnapore, testifies that Kali as the symbol of power inspired revolutionaries. . Captain Sushil Khastagir of the Indian National Army (INA), who was initially an activist of the Anushilan Samiti, has testified that the revolutionaries received their initiation in cremation grounds before the image of Kali who was the deity of revolution. He was naturally inspired by the image of Kali depicted by Vivekananda because it served to enkindle a militant mentality, which he missed in Ramakrishna. The noted scholar Sankari Prasad Basu has highlighted the difference between the respective visualizations of Goddess Kali by Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. According to him, the Kali of Ramakrishna was full of sweetness and love, for Vivekananda, she was the personification of the terrible, the specter of death. She was not the goddess visualized by the famous devotee composer, Ramprasad Sen, but rather the symbol of destruction.[109] Like the revolutionaries, he viewed Kali as an inspiring symbol in the struggle against of British imperialism.

Thus, it appears that Bose, on the whole, found a more militant ideal and also a more inspiring call to action in Vivekananda. Bose was restless and buoyant by nature and found his words more positive and appealing than Ramakrishna's. The influence of both Vivekananda and Ramakrishna were, however, manifested in the second phase of his student life.

The Second Phase of Bose's Student Life (1913-16):

The second phase of Bose's student life began at Presidency College, Calcutta. He studied in Presidency College for about three years (1913-16) after which he was expelled from the college for an alleged involvement in an assault on a European professor, E. F. Oaten. During his tenure at Presidency College, Bose developed a proper political consciousness for the first time. As a result of his peer group influence, his idea on constructive nationalism also began to unfold. Finally, he became sure about his mission in life, particularly after his expulsion from the college.

Peer group Influence on Bose

In Presidency College, Bose found several groups among the students. There were the sons of rich folk, then, a group of "book worms", thirdly, a group of boys who considered themselves the spiritual heirs of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, and finally, there was a secret group of revolutionaries.[110] Bose affiliated himself to the third group headed by Suresh Chandra Banerji and consisting of other members like Bose's friend Hemanta Kumar Sarkar, J.K.Adhya, etc. Dr. Suresh Banerji had participated in the *swadeshi* movement following the partition of Bengal and had decided to dedicate his life to constructive national work. He wished to set up an *ashrama* or centre for social welfare with the help of the youth of the country.[111] According to Bose, this group slowly began to contemplate a first class educational institution with branches in different places, which would turn out real men.[112] Some of its members wanted it to be modelled along the lines of Tagore's Vishwa Bharati University and the Arya Samaji Gurukul in Northern India where special attention was paid to enlisting brilliant students in different fields who could later become professors in the proposed institutes.[113] Bose also associated himself with charitable institutions like the Anath Bhandar of South Calcutta and enlisted himself as a volunteer and begged from door to door to collect provision for the poor.[114] Bose, who had had experience with social work at Cuttack, undertook his responsibilities with great enthusiasm under his peer group's influence. The impact of these years was long lasting as evident from his letters from Cambridge to C.R.Das where he provided a blueprint for national reconstruction with particular emphasis on social service.[115] While he was an Intermediate student in Presidency College, he participated energetically in flood and famine relief activities. He procured funds for the famine-stricken people in different parts of the country and became the Secretary of the College Famine Fund.[116] He expressed his desire to go out personally to do relief work because "experience of famines is something that you cannot have all the time."[117]

It must be noted, however, that Bose was not inclined towards any ideology during his student years. But he himself has acknowledged that his peer group association helped him develop intellectually.[118] According to him, "There was a thirst for new ideas, so new books on philosophy, history and nationalism were greedily devoured and the information thus acquired was passed on to others."[119] Moreover, he and his friends visited

historical places of importance to get a feel of history.[120] Hemanta Kumar Sarkar has written that Bose was deeply moved by the sight of the battlefield of Plassey when he visited it along with Sarkar, Suresh Chandra Banerji and others.[121] It may be suggested that Bose developed an admiration for Nawab Sirajudoullah. In 1940, when he began the Holwell monument agitation, he used the Nawab's name as a symbol. At the same time, since his association was not so much with the secret revolutionaries, his peer group influence did not incline him towards revolutionary politics. Rather, it played an important role in deepening his religious instincts. From the testimony of Bose's friend, Pramatha Nath Sarkar, it is known that Bose visited religious places like Dakshineshwar and Belur Math with his peer group and came into contact with disciples of Swami Vivekananda like Swami Brahmananda, Premananda and Sarvananda.[122] However, we also know from the account of Hemanta Kumar Sarkar that the monks of Belur Math did not encourage political discussions.[123]

His association perhaps inclined him towards spiritual pursuits. Suresh Chandra Banerji says that Bose dreaded the prospect of being dragged into the world of action and wished to devote his life to the pursuit of God.[124] Bose has himself noted that his contacts with ascetics led him on the quest for a *guru* and he subsequently left home on a pilgrimage with his friend Hemanta Kumar Sarkar.[125] He toured Benares, Mathura, Hardwar, etc., but he was largely disillusioned by his experiences. He began to realize that Hindu Society had many shortcomings, for he was not served food at Hardwar and had to eat separately at Bodh Gaya because he and his friend belonged to a different caste. He was also prevented from drawing water from a well since he was not a brahmin.[126]

In his later political life, Bose vehemently attacked artificial social discriminations like caste and upheld equality. The origins of this attitude may be traced back to his early experiences during his pilgrimage. At Kashi, he met Swami Brahmananda at the Ramakrishna Mission who knew both him and his father. Bose later told his friend, Dilip Kumar Roy, that it was Swami Brahmananda who persuaded him to abandon his spiritual pursuits, return home and devote himself to the service of his country.[127] There is no evidence however, to suggest that Swami Brahmananda urged Bose to join the political movement and Bose did not receive any political inspiration from him. Bose developed political consciousness not because of his peer group influence but according to his own testimony it was a result of the racial arrogance of the British and the events that occurred during the First World War.[128]

Origin of Bose's Political Consciousness

Bose has himself written that despite the political atmosphere of Calcutta, he would not have developed politically but for some fortuitous circumstances.[129] Although his main orientation was towards national reconstruction, his exposure to some important political leaders during the first part of his student life Calcutta opened new vistas. He developed a great admiration for Aurobindo Ghosh who was the most popular leader of Bengal at the time. Bose noted that he had championed left wing thought on the Congress platform as a fearless advocate of complete independence at a time when most other leaders spoke only of colonial self-government. Bose noted further, "When I came to Calcutta in 1913, Aurobindo was already a legendary figure. Rarely have I seen people speak of a leader with such rapturous enthusiasm."[130] Dilip Kumar Roy testifies to Bose's fascination for the letters written by Aurobindo Ghosh to his wife Mrinalini Devi.[131] According to Bose, he was attracted by the letters and writings of Aurobindo Ghosh rather than the mysticism surrounding his name[132].

Drawing a parallel between Aurobindo Ghosh and the noted moderate leader Sir Surendra nath Banerji, Bose said that despite the flowery rhetoric and consummate oratory of Banerji, he lacked the deeper passion which one found in such simple words of Aurobindo Ghosh as "I should like to see some of you becoming great, great not for your own sake, but to make India great, so that she may stand up with head erect amongst the free nations of the world. Work that she might prosper, suffer that she might rejoice."[133] Bose found in this, an inspiring call to national work. His spirit of patriotism received a fillip and it indirectly influenced his future political evolution.

The largest single factor, which directly helped Bose develop political consciousness, was the attitude of racialism displayed by the British towards Indians. Bose has noted that in Calcutta, the British were purposely rude towards Indians and humiliated them at the least opportunity.[134] He himself was occasionally the victim of racial arrogance as testified by his friend Nalini Kishore Guha.[135], and such experiences jolted his sensitive mind.[136] He noted that when it was apparent that the redressal of grievances was impossible, the Indians resolved to hit back. The noted scholar Suniti Kumar Ghosh is of the opinion that such was the bitterness engendered by the racial attitude of Britishers that when Mohun Bagan Athletic Club won the I.F.A. Shield

in 1911, defeating the East York team of England, the Bengalis hailed it as a national victory since it proved that it was possible to smash the myth of British superiority at least in the field of sports. Interesting details about the changing mentality of the Indians and their tendency to retaliate aggressively, may be found in the memoirs of the famous woman nationalist of Bengal, Sarala Devi, who inspired the youth of Bengal to pay every offensive British back in his own coin. Whether Bose was acquainted with Sarala Devi in his early college days is not known, but in his later political life, he came to know her and addressed a women's meeting at Woodburn Park on March 16, 1928, chaired by Sarala Devi.[137] This compelled some consideration from the British and the word went round that the Englishmen respected physical force alone. This phenomenon was the psychological basis for revolutionary terrorism, at least in Bengal.[138]

The First World War too helped in raising Bose's political consciousness. Bose, who was seriously ill at that time, subjected himself to searching self-analysis. He asked himself, "Was it possible to divide a nation's life into two compartments and hand over one of them to the foreigner reserving the other to ourselves?"[139] The answer he arrived at was that, political freedom was indivisible and meant complete independence from foreign control and tutelage. The war had shown that a nation that did not possess military strength could not hope to preserve its independence.[140] The war convinced him that there could be "two compartments", and freedom meant nothing short of complete independence.[141] After joining the national movement, Bose consistently and eloquently championed the cause of complete independence and not dominion status. The roots of this idea may thus be traced back to his early days at Presidency College.

Moreover, Bose correctly appreciated the importance of the military factor, which enabled a nation to preserve its independence. Though he did not then envisage an armed struggle against British imperialism, yet the realization appears to have dawned on him that the British only appreciated military force. Later, he became convinced that the main cause behind India's political subjection was her forcible disarmament by the British. In his book, *The Indian Struggle*, he wrote, "After the revolution of 1857, the British realized that by sheer brutal force, they could not hold India long. They, therefore, proceeded to disarm the country. And the greatest folly and mistake that our predecessors committed, was to submit to disarmament, Having once disarmed the country completely, it has been possible for the British to hold

India with the help of a small but modern efficient army."[142] This idea may have originated in his mind long ago during his student days at Presidency College. Bose's nephew, Pradip Bose, is of the opinion that Bose's overall approach was "completely modern", as evidenced by his "well thought out propositions" in 1914. By "well thought out propositions", Pradip Bose refers to Bose's early realization that political independence for a subject race was a "must" and this could not be achieved without military power.[143] After passing the Intermediate Examinations in 1915, Bose opted for an Honours course in Philosophy. Due to his excessive preoccupation with spiritual pursuits, Bose's results in the Intermediate Examinations were not good. He resolved to make up for it in his graduation course and devoted himself to his studies. At this point of time, he got involved in a students movement at Presidency College, organized in protest against Professor E.F. Oaten's alleged misbehaviour towards Indian students. The matter took a serious turn and ultimately the students assaulted the professor. Subsequently, Bose was rusticated from the college and the University. However, the Oaten incident proved to be a turning point in his life.

The Oaten Incident and Bose's Emergence as a Student Leader

In Presidency College, Bose emerged for the first time as a student leader. He was the class representative as well as an elected member of the Students Consultative committee, which had been set up by the Principal H.R. James. Before the Oaten incident, Bose did not have much opportunity to provide leadership in a student's movement but had been prominent otherwise. He organized a Debating Club in Presidency College where topics related to India's native heritage were debated, for instance. "The utility of the study of history", "The fundamental principle of life", "Social responsibilities of students", "The national language of India", "The cause behind the backwardness of the students community of Bengal", etc.[144] Bose also figured prominently in the publication of the college magazine and in its first edition, wrote an article on a noted Indian philanthropist, Taraknath Palit.[145]

It may be inferred that Bose reacted in his own way against the policy of the college authorities to create a feeling of loyalty towards the British among the students. The college magazines had earlier been replete with

eulogies of British rule.[146] Bose envisaged the debating club not as a platform for political propaganda but rather as a stimulant for the powers of the intellect. Bose was himself an impressive debater.[147] He reportedly told Dilip Kumar Roy that if democracy was to be established in India, it should be initiated through debating clubs.[148] He believed that a free exchange of opinions would contribute to the fostering of a democratic spirit. Bose's performance as a debater contributed to his emergence as a student leader.

While Bose was not yet politically inclined, the general atmosphere at Presidency College indicated that the students were fast developing a political mentality. The Education Department was worried about the growing ferment in the student community and reported in 1919, that, "spirit of insubordination and a reluctance to render unquestioning obedience to rules and orders promulgated by lawful authority was being manifested.[149] Professor Oaten has also noted in his memoirs "There was a vigorous political agitation going on and some of the students were gradually affected."[150]

On January 10, 1916, Professor Oaten was alleged to have manhandled an Indian student. A student strike followed on January 11, 1916, in protest against the incident and Bose provided the leadership. The strike proved a success largely because of the personal efforts of Bose who prevented the students of the Bhowanipore locality from entering the college and he took the lead in picketing at the college gate.[151] The strike ended on January 13, 1916, when a compromise was arrived at after Professor Oaten expressed regrets for his conduct. This was Bose's first exposure to protest politics. He displayed his capacity of leadership and organization that served as a prelude to his future political career.

On January 15, 1916, Professor Oaten was again reported to have manhandled and abused an Indian student. This provoked some angry students to assault him physically. Bose was suspected of complicity in the assault and subsequently expelled from the college and rusticated from University. Some pertinent observations may be made in this context.

In the first place, while it cannot be ascertained whether Bose himself took part in the assault, but he did have considerable support for the cause of the students. He told the Committee of Enquiry appointed by the Government of Bengal headed by Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, that though the assault was not justified, the students had acted under great provocation.[152] Rabindra nath Tagore echoed the same feeling saying, "India for Europeans, is a land of exile. Here the European professor does not look upon his

vocation simply as that of a teacher. He feels himself also to be a king of the country. Therefore, our students will stand out for their own life and respect."[153] It may be inferred that one of the reasons, which brought Bose and Tagore close to each other in the future, was Tagore's sympathy for the students in the Oaten incident.

Secondly, Bose considered the Oaten affair a turning point in his life. He later wrote, "Little did I then realize the inner significance of the tragic events of 1916. My Principal had expelled me, but he had made my future career. I had established a precedent for myself from which I could not easily depart in future. I had stood up with courage and composure in a crisis and fulfilled my duty. I had developed self-confidence as well as initiative, which was to stand me in good stead in future. I had a foretaste of leadership, though in a very restricted sphere, and of the martyrdom that it involves. I had acquired character and could face the future with equanimity."[154] It is clear from this that Bose felt a sense of pride for having been made an example in a fight for a noble cause. He derived a feeling of "supreme satisfaction" for having done the right thing and there was no trace of regret in his mind.[155] Bose developed an uncompromising mentality and also the readiness to risk his own future without vacillation to uphold certain values and principles. This attitude was reflected in many cases in his political life, where he refused to compromise on his convictions.

When Bose actively associated himself with students' movements in his later political career he cited the example of his expulsion from Presidency College to exhort and inspire the students. Speaking at the Central Province and Berar Students Conference at Amraoti, on December 1, 1929, he said that the day on which he was expelled, was a red letter day for him as it was the first occasion in his life when he had a taste of joy derived from suffering for a cause compared to which all other joys of life faded into insignificance.[156]

Thirdly, while Bose still did not emerge as a political leader, his role in the Oaten episode had political undertones. The prominent revolutionary, Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee, sent him a congratulatory message.[157] Sibnath Banerji, another noted political activist, has, written, "When we heard of the Oaten incident in University College, we shouted *Bandematarm* at the top of our voice. The exuberance of youth was fed by the feeling that someone at least tried to uphold the prestige of India. His subsequent rustication endeared him to us still more."[158] From the testimony of S.C. Cangri and who

was then a student of Presidency College and who later became President of the Indian Chamber of Commerce in Burma and joined the Azad Hind Fauz, Bose was accorded an emotional farewell by the students of the college and his departure from the college was hailed by them as the beginning of India's independence movement.[159]

Contemporary scholars like Dr. Amal Mukhopadhyay have opined that, Bose sounded the bugle of a daring struggle against British imperialism in Presidency College, which witnessed the first sparks of his uncompromising revolutionary leadership.[160]

However, sufficient source material cannot be found to trace a direct connection between the Oaten incident and Bose's subsequent emergence as a political leader. Hugh Toye, in his study of Bose, makes a thought provoking comment that Bose came to regard himself as the victim of racial prejudice and his aim now was to show himself as superior to the white-faced foreigners.[161] Toye's view is partly supported by Bose's letter to his friend Hemanta Kumar Sarkar written from Cambridge on November 12, 1919, in which he wrote that, "Nothing makes me happier than to be served by the whites and to watch them clean my shoes."[162] It is not certain that Bose developed a feeling of racial prejudice against the British as a direct result of the Oaten incident. Peter Ward Fay in his study of Bose does not endorse Toye's allegation that Bose developed racial hatred against the British. According to him, Bose was pleased to have his shoes "cleaned by a British because it showed that Englishmen were prepared to treat him as a gentleman. Thus he was actually appreciative of the attitude of the Britishers rather than racially biased against them."[163] The aforesaid letter was written about three years after the Oaten incident when Bose was at Cambridge. By that time, his political consciousness had increased considerably. Other incidents like the Jalianwala Bagh massacre had taken place, which had increased his resentment against British imperialism. At the same time there is no evidence to show that he was purposely rude to any Britisher.

To sum up, the Oaten incident did not directly inspire Bose's future struggle against British imperialism, but served as a stepping-stone to his future political career. Professor Oaten has described Bose as a young idealist.[164] His entire stand in the Oaten incident reflected his idealistic bent of mind. Since he was still a student, his foremost concern was to resume his studies rather than plunge into politics. However, he was deeply sensitive about his self-esteem and also the honour of his country and developed a determination to fight against wrongs and injustices.

In an address sent to the Surma Valley Students Conference, in May 1929, he exhorted the students to fearlessly resist injustice and oppression because tolerance of oppression meant an insult to man's humanity.[165] This was perhaps influenced by the effect of his personal experience in the past, specially the Oaten incident that left an indelible mark on Bose's life. After an interlude following his expulsion from Presidency College, he was able to secure re-admission in Scottish Church College, in July 1917, through the intervention of Sir Ashutosh Mukherji. With the resumption of his studies, the third and final phase of his student life commenced.

The Third Phase of Bose's Student Life (1917-19) :

Bose's life at Scottish Church College was free from turmoil. He devoted himself wholeheartedly to his studies. Bose developed intellectually during this period. Secondly, though there was no evidence of direct political influence, yet Bose developed politically as well, since he got an opportunity to receive military training.

So far as the development of Bose's philosophical views is concerned, he participated actively in the debates of the Philosophical Society of Scottish Church College, On February 1, 1918, Bose presented a paper entitled 'A Defence of Materialism' where he argued that materialism resulted in an optimistic outlook and materialistic nations attained national power and glory.[166] The paper came in for severe criticism and Dr. Urquhart who chaired the meeting, argued that India needed more idealism and not materialism.[167] Interestingly, on September 6, 1918, Bose presented another paper 'A Defence of Idealism', in which he supported the idealistic monism of Hegel, but differed from Hegel and Schopenhauer in conceiving of the absolute not as Pure Reason or Pure Will but as spirit in all its fullness, striving through all the processes of the world to rise into the bliss of self-consciousness in the life of man.[168]

Some critical observations might be made in this connection. It may be questioned as to why Bose radically reversed his position and wrote 'A Defence of Idealism' immediately after his 'Defence of materialism'. Was this a self-contradiction? To answer this question, the pattern of evolution of Bose's philosophical views, needs to be recapitulated. He had written to

Hemanta Kumar Sarkar on September 16, 1915, "When Hegel's philosophy was first preached in this world, all the people thought as if his was the last word. But the world is unfortunate. The march of philosophy has now left Hegel behind."[169] He, thus, did not accept Hegel's philosophy unreservedly. Then, after taking Honours in Philosophy at Presidency College, Bose discovered that, "Western philosophy begins with doubt. It regards everything with a critical eye, takes nothing on trust, and teaches us to argue logically and to detect fallacies. In other words, it emancipates the mind from preconceived notions."[170] Bose has testified that he even questioned the truth of the *Vedanta* on which he had taken his stand so long and began to write essays in defence of materialism purely as an intellectual exercise.[171] It follows from this that when Bose wrote his *Defence of Materialism*, he was not actually espousing the cause of materialism. He simply wanted to liberate his mind from dogmas and adopted an attitude of rational scepticism by exploring the possible counter points to idealism. From Bose's letter to Hemanta Sarkar on September 16, 1915, it appears that Hegel's predecessor, Immanuel Kant, influenced him here. He wrote, "Do you know what Kant's philosophy is like? It assumes something to be true, analyses it and criticizes it ruthlessly and then gives it up. And having given it up, it arrives at a higher truth. Then once again, the latter is analysed and criticized in the same manner and ultimately you arrive at the highest truth . . . Life progresses through continuous construction and destruction. Construct something, then destroy it, build something else, and destroy it again and so on."[172] In the same letter, Bose wrote that, the utility of studying philosophy was that one came to understand one's own questions and doubts and also became acquainted with the views of other people. He could then organize and direct his line of thinking.[173] Bose was temperamentally not a materialist and rather had a spiritual bent, but he appreciated the necessity of developing a largeness of mind so as to obtain an unbiased view. His defence of materialism was thus an example of intellectual experimentation by a truth seeker. The late scholar Dr. Amiya Majumdar has observed that Bose refuted materialism immediately after defending it in consonance with the tradition of Indian philosophy, which believed in refuting a viewpoint after initially establishing it.[174]

Leonard Gordon has observed that Bose's presentation of idealism came close to the mature statement of his philosophical views in the final chapter of his autobiography.[175] Bose described his philosophical position as being that of a pragmatist rather than an absolutist.[176] He also said that he was

a benevolent agnostic and a relativist to whom truth was not absolute but relative.[177] Bose found an element of truth in all philosophical schools of thought like the *Sankhya* philosophy, Herbert Spencer's view of evolution, Henri Bergson's theory of creative evolution and Hegel's dialectical view of evolution. Of all these theories, Hegel's theory appeared to provide a more satisfactory explanation of reality than the others.[178] Bose reaffirmed his stand in an article entitled "My Personal Testament", dated November 29, 1940, just before his departure from India.[179] He derived his inspiration from Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, who in his opinion did not condemn any school of philosophy but discovered some element of truth in every system.[180] Here, a direct connection may be traced between Bose's philosophical ideas and his political concepts. When, in later years, he evolved his own political ideology of *samyavada*, which represented a synthesis of communism and fascism while being essentially rooted in Indian culture and tradition, he did not identify himself either philosophically or ideologically with either communism or fascism. His response to both reflected an open mind, as he was not averse to accepting whatever was positive in these systems. Bose was essentially eclectic in his philosophical approach but instead of creating intellectual confusion in his mind, it made him practical and pragmatic. A noted scholar, Prof. Prasanta Kumar Ghosh, has shown that while Bose was greatly influenced by Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, he did not consider their views to be final and sacrosanct, as evident from his essay, 'Defence of Materialism' which he wrote to clarify doubts in his mind and this reflected his rationalistic bent of mind. He used the same approach towards contemporary ideologies and systems.[181] Dr. G.L. Adhya, former Professor of History, National Council for Education Research Training is of the opinion that Bose's study of logic and philosophy accounted for his rationalism, manifested in his insistence on knowing the reasons for or against any issue. This view is supported by Bose's own statement that, "If emotions get the better of you, you lose reason, critical power, analytic and synthetic power."[182] In his later political life too he judged every political system on its merit and not from any predetermined standpoint. The roots of Bose's political pragmatism may thus be traced back to his early years as student of philosophy. In a letter to the Secretary of the philosophical Society, Scottish Church College, written from Vienna on September 12, 1934, he wrote, "I owe much to the two years study of philosophy which I prosecuted (sic.) at Scottish Church College. It helped me to discipline my

intellect and sharpen my judgement and thereby prepare myself for the subsequent struggle, which has been in store for me."[183]

Bose also acknowledged his debt to Principal Urquhart who was a pragmatist. In a private conversation with colleague, Narendra Narayan Chakravarti, Bose said that he became a pragmatist under his influence.[184] Thus, at Scottish Church College, he attained maturity of thought and the foundations for his political philosophy were laid here. Mihir Bose is of the opinion that for Bose, philosophy was not a substitute for politics but an aid.[185] In fact it was perhaps much more. It was one of the determining factors of his political thought.

Apart from progressing at the philosophical level, Bose also developed his political consciousness further at Scottish Church College. He joined the University Unit in the India Defence Force, where he had his first exposure to military training from which he drew much inspiration. He attended a camp in Belgharia where he had the opportunity of musketry practice at the rifle range. Bose has noted that this military experience created a sense of discipline and self-confidence in him. According to him, "the first day we marched into Fort William to bring our rifles, we experienced a queer feeling of satisfaction as if we were taking possession of something to which we had an inherent right but of which we had been unjustly deprived."[186] Dr. Satish Chandra Maikap, in his doctoral study on the Cadet Corps of India, writes that, "University Corps was the organisation where Netaji had his basic military training, which probably helped him later in leading the INA."[187] According to him, "National leadership and military service training, the two salient features of the Corps training, had its best expression in Subhas Chandra Bose within a decade of his leaving the University Corps."[188] Dr. Satish Chandra Maikap, however, adds that there was little direct reflection of Bose's early military training on his military leadership in future, he developed an inner sense of duty and discipline along with an independent spirit which grew in logical sequence. It is important to note that Bose displayed a fascination for militarism throughout his political career. Leonard Gordon is of the opinion that Bose had considerable interest in the military. Stephen Cohen says that Bose was one of the leaders who found the military attractive.[189] At the Calcutta Congress Session of 1928, he organized a Volunteers Army and appeared in military uniform. Here, he was perhaps inspired by his own experience at Scottish Church College, which made him appreciate the need to awaken self-confidence in the Indian Youth. Secondly,

Bose's experience acted as a prelude to his subsequent views on militarism and also his close association with volunteer organizations.

Bose passed the B.A. examinations standing second from the University. He intended to do his M.A. in Experimental Psychology but his father decided to send him to England to compete in the Indian Civil Service (ICS) examinations.

Bose in England:

Bose developed intellectually as well as politically during his stay in England, which set the stage for his final plunge into the freedom movement. According to Bose's own testimony, he read a number of books by eminent international personalities like Bismarck, Metternich and Cavour. This enabled him to become acquainted with the inner currents of international politics.[190] Bose's close friend, Dilip Kumar Roy, has mentioned that he read the works of Garibaldi, Mazzini, Lenin and Kropotkin.[191] These enhanced his knowledge of international revolutionary politics.

Secondly, Bose also cultivated contacts with Irish revolutionaries associated with the Sinn Fein movement in Ireland from whom, he wished to learn the techniques of revolution.[192] In a private conversation with Dilip Kumar Roy in England, he referred specifically to the Irish Movement and compared it with the revolutionary movement in India at the dawn of the twentieth century, which to him was the first movement to create a nucleus of national consciousness.[193] It may be observed in this connection that the Jallianwalabagh incident, mentioned earlier, created a profound impact on his sensitive mind. He noted that there was a great deal of sympathy for General Dyer who had been responsible for the massacre among middle class English men.[194] Such instances may have impelled Bose to appreciate a revolutionary path of struggle. He also familiarized himself with the works of Lenin and Trotsky.[195] It is not known how deeply Bose read communist literature during his stay in England, but it is evident that he had come to develop a historical respect for the Russian revolution. Prof. Gautam Chattopadhyay, son of Bose's close friend Kshitish Prasad Chattopadhyay, who studied with him at Cambridge, has testified that Bose was not attracted towards the communist ideology.[196] He adds that Kshitish Prasad Chattopadhyay organized a Welfare League in London with the help of the communists and established

contacts with the Communist International. Bose, however, was not interested in the international communist movement.[197] At the same time, Bose observed that the Labour Party of Britain was sympathetic to Indian aspirations. Some of its members like Sir Oswald Mosley were particularly critical of General Dyer and Sir Michael O. Dwyer the Governor of Punjab, for their roles in the Jallianwalabagh incident. Bose began to think in terms of cultivating friendship with Labour leaders in England.[198] In this connection, it may be noted that when Bose visited England later in January 1938, he met a number of Labour leaders and trade unionists. On January 14, 1938, he was felicitated at Conway Hall by the India League, under the Chairmanship of the veteran Labour leader George Lansbury who expressed the hope that under Bose's tenure as President of the Congress, India would register advance in the direction of independence. Bose responded saying that though he had been disillusioned by the activities of the British Labour Party, yet he was interested in maintaining contacts with it.[199] It may be noted here that, he was also felicitated by the Socialist League of London where he was able to make a deep impression on Clement Atlee, who later became Prime Minister of England.[200] Bose's intimacy with the Labour leaders of England may be traced back to his early days as a student at Cambridge.

While in England, Bose frequently visited the 'Indian Majlis', an association of Indian students in London, and also the Union Society, where lively debates were held. He became a spokesman of the Indian students overseas and took up the case of some students who aspired to enlist in the University Officers Training Course. The India Office however, raised objections to it. He personally met the Secretary of the State for India, Lord Lytton, but could not ensure compliance with the demands of the students since the War Office apprehended that the students might demand commissions in the British army. Lord Lytton's personal opinion was that Indian students might join revolutionary politics in India once they received military training.[201]

Two observations may be made here. Firstly, Bose was all along a consistent champion of the legitimate aspirations of students. Even when he was exiled in Vienna from 1933-36 he stood for the overseas Indian students in Germany. Secondly, Bose appears to have supported the demand of the students to join the University Officers Training Course because his personal experience of military training in India while he was a student at Scottish Church College had convinced him about its importance. Perhaps even in these early years he visualised an ultimate showdown with British imperialism during which military training would prove to be of great value.

Bose passed the I.C.S. examinations securing the fourth place. However, after deep deliberation, he decided to renounce his I.C.S job and join the national movement. This was one of the crucial decisions of his life because in those days it was uncommon for a middleclass Bengali to renounce a service as prestigious as the I.C.S. Haripada Chowdhury is of the opinion that people like Bose who did not have to fight poverty and starvation in life, are normally destined to become government officers. Bose was a notable exception.[202] In order to understand the reasons, which prompted Bose to do this, it is necessary to analyze his reasons for appearing in the I.C.S examination in the first place.

Bose's Decision to Resign from the ICS:

From the available source material, it appears that Bose was not particularly inclined to compete for the I.C.S. job. He wrote to Hemanta Kumar Sarkar prior to his departure from England, "A great danger would arise if I manage to pass the Civil Service Examination. That will mean giving up my goal in life."[203] In a later letter, he wrote, "I had consented to go abroad after a long struggle, yet I was not able to convince myself that my decision had been right"[204] It may be suggested that Bose sat for the examination because he calculated that even if he decided not to accept the I.C.S. job, the very fact of his having qualified successfully in a competition with the British, would serve as a great psychological booster. Bose later confided to Narendra Narayan Chakravarti that he was extremely satisfied after standing first in the paper on English composition because despite being Englishmen, his competitors lost out to him in English.[205]

Secondly, according to Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose, Bose wanted utilize his stay in England for the accumulation of new knowledge and experience.[206] Bose evidently realized that if he intended to play an effective role in the national movement, he had to take stock of the international situation. Furthermore, his stay in England enabled him to learn new revolutionary techniques of struggle.

A pertinent question, which may be raised here, is that if Bose was affected by the JalianwalaBagh massacres why did he still decide to try for a job, which was essentially British. It is quite possible that the British policy of press censorship prevented the news of the incident from spreading all

over India. Bose himself has stated that hardly any news of the massacre had travelled outside Punjab, which was under martial law. On the whole, the public was ignorant of what had happened and Bose, to quote his own words, "sailed for England in a complacent mood."[207]

Bose decided to renounce his ICS job not out of an impulsive feeling of patriotism but for cogent and practical reasons. In the first place, it was consistent with the inherent sprit of idealism manifested in a letter to Sarat Chandra Bose saying that a service, which assured him a good income and comfortable life, could be accepted only at the expense of his soul. To him, it was hypocrisy to maintain that the highest ideals of one's life were compatible with subordination to the conditions of service under British rule.[208] This was in consonance with the views expressed in his early letters to his mother from Cuttuck that obtaining good jobs was not the end of education.

Secondly, Bose was imbued with a spirit of adventure as against the routine of every day life. He wrote in the aforesaid letter "Life loses half of its interest if there is no struggle – if there are no risks to be taken. The uncertainties of life are not appalling to one who has not at heart worldly ambitions.[209] He also wrote to his friend Charu Chandra Ganguly, "You are aware that once before I sailed forth on the sea of life at the call of duty. The ship has now reached a port offering great allurement where power, property and wealth are at my command. But the response from the innermost corner of my heart is you will not find happiness in this. The way to your happiness lies in your dancing around with the surging waves of the ocean."[210] This was consistent with the stand Bose took in his political life where he constantly exhorted the youth with the idea of a life of adventure. He wrote in an autograph book much later on February 23, 1938, "There is nothing that lures me more than a life of adventure away from the beaten track and in search of the unknown."[211] Bose obviously felt that if he accepted the I.C.S job, he would have to lead a life totally devoid of excitement and adventure.

Thirdly, Bose was greatly inspired by the examples of C.R. Das and Aurobindo Ghosh. He wrote to Sarat Chandra Bose on February 16, 1921, that "If C.R. Das at this age can give up everything and face the uncertainties of life, I am sure a young man like myself who has no worldly cares to trouble him, is much more capable of doing so."[212] He also accepted Aurobindo Ghosh as his role model and wrote in the same letter that, "The path of

Aruobindo Ghosh is to me, more noble more inspiring, more thorny than the path of Ramesh Dutta." [213]. . This proves the incorrectness of the view of the American historian Stanley Wolpert that Bose was excited by the revolutionary call of Gandhi and hence decided to give up his job.[214] Bose was influenced mainly by Aurobindo Ghosh and C.R. Das rather than Gandhi.

Bose believed that although Ramesh Chandra Dutta did serve his country he was greatly hindered by the fact that he was a member of the bureaucracy.[215] Bose was convinced that he, too, would not be able to serve his country the way he desired, within the framework of the colonial bureaucracy. Aurobindo Ghosh on the other hand, had deliberately absented himself from the riding test after passing the I.C.S. written examinations with distinction[216], because he knew that service under an alien bureaucracy would be an impediment to genuine patriotic action. Bose found echoes of his own thoughts in this action and wrote to his brother on February 23, 1921, that, "The illustrious example of Aurobindo Ghosh looms before my vision. Aurobindo Ghosh is to me, my spiritual Guru."[217] At this stage the influence of Aurobido Ghosh on Bose, was considerable.

Furthermore, Bose wanted to set an example, which others would emulate. He wrote to Sarat Chandra Bose, "I believe we shall get Home Rule within ten years and certainly earlier if we are ready to pay the price. This consists of sacrifice and suffering. If we all stick to our jobs and look after our own interests, I don't think we shall get Home Rule even in fifty years."[218] He added that no Indian, in the history of British India, had given up the Civil Service with a patriotic motive and it was high time the members of the I.C.S. set an example by resigning their posts.[219] From this it may be inferred that Bose was thinking of contributing to the collapse of British bureaucracy. He felt that the best way to bring a government to a stop was to withdraw from it.[220] Thus, Bose decided to resign from the Civil Service because he believed that by making the bureaucratic machinery unworkable a step would be taken towards India's freedom. He considered himself duty bound to join the freedom movement, which was in a nebulous and chaotic condition.[221] He felt that if one kept aloof from the movement, its pace of progress would be slackened[222]. From the memoirs of M.C. Chagla, an Indian Ambassador to the United States, it is known that Bose consulted the Muslim Leader Muhammed Ali Jinnah before renouncing the I.C.S. and the latter advised him to join the service because people like Bose were required for it. Bose was initially influenced by this advice but later changed his mind.[223]

Bose's line of thinking indicated that he evaluated the prevalent situation in a mature way, and had clear-cut objectives and plans. From his two letters to C.R. Das written from Cambridge, one gets an idea of his concept of constructive nationalism based on purposeful planning. He had already developed some views on constructive nationalism but it was not related to the political movement. However, when he decided to take his plunge into the political movement, he elaborated his concepts in the light of the freedom movement. It may be described as Bose's philosophy of constructive politics.

Bose's Philosophy of Constructive Politics:

Bose decided to join the national movement with certain ideas about the direction in which the movement ought to be guided. He had also visualized the problems of national reconstruction. He wrote two letters to C.R. Das from Cambridge, and these bear testimony to the fact that he had thought seriously about India's socioeconomic problems.

In his first letter, dated February 16, 1921, he expressed his intention to plunge into national work with resolute determination, and referred to certain areas of work where he could render meaningful service like teaching at the National College, writing and publishing books and newspapers, organizing village societies, spreading education among the common people, etc.[224]

He also made some thoughtful recommendations about the policy the Congress ought to adopt. He was of the opinion that the Congress should maintain a permanent research staff for the collection of up-to-date facts and figures on national problems. He also pointed out the need for a definite policy on currency and exchange, demanded universal franchise for men and women and called for the amelioration of the depressed classes.[225] It was evident that he was thinking in terms of a democratic, socialist republic as early as 1921. In his subsequent speeches as a Congress activist, Bose strongly championed the objectives he had enunciated in his letter to C.R. Das. Dr. Chittabrata Palit feels that Bose's letters to C.R. Das are steeped in democratic thought. His desire to offer himself as a humble worker willing to accept any portfolio on a shadow government indicates that he had no ambition for power.[226]

In his second letter to C.R. Das on March 2, 1921, Bose spoke of the

need for a clear policy on labour and factory legislation, vagrancy and relief to the poor. He also wrote that the Congress had no determined policy about the type of constitution India would adopt after the attainment of *Swaraj*.[227] Moreover, he emphasized mass education, social service and establishment of cooperative banks.[228] He observed instructively, "right from now when the work of destruction is going on, we must begin to create. If the Congress can draw up a complete programme, we shall not have to worry about our policy in respect of any question when we have achieved *Swaraj*". Bose also wrote to his friend Kshetresh Chattopadhyay from Cambridge on February 2, 1921, that while old institutions needed to be destroyed new institutions needed to be built up simultaneously.[229] In this connection, it may be observed that while Bose assigned top priority to India's political freedom, he was in favour of a parallel and simultaneous movement for national reconstruction. Advance planning was urgently required because without it, India would be confronted with a number of problems after independence, which would seriously impede her progress. Bose gave a comprehensive blueprint for India's national reconstruction in his Presidential speech at the Haripura Congre of 1938, the seeds of which may be traced to the ideas expressed in 1921.

Bose was particularly vocal in his advocacy of an Intelligence Department in the Congress, which would publish booklets and conduct extensive propaganda among the public. Books explaining the general Congress policy would be brought out for dissemination of information and awakening of consciousness among the public. Prof. Prasanta Kumar Ghosh is of the opinion that Bose's emphasis on propaganda was reminiscent of the 'Agitprop' department of the Bolshevik Party.[230] According to him, Bose must have been aware of agitprop programme as he stressed the need for a similar apparatus.[231]

Here, a continuity in the thought process of Bose may be noted because later in his political life, he became an eloquent advocate of propaganda, particularly foreign propaganda. It is not certain whether at that point of time, Bose was thinking in terms of foreign propaganda. His immediate concern was with propaganda on a national scale for mobilizing the people.

From Bose's letters to C.R. Das, it appears that he was capable of cool and logical thinking even in the midst of mental turmoil. Prof. Prasanta Kumar Ghosh notes that no other contemporary leader raised the questions and issues emphasized by Bose in a manner emancipated from emotion and

animated by intelligence.[232] Avra Ghosh, an analyst, also feels that politics was not a matter of impulsive intoxication for Bose.[233] He notes that Bose's enthusiasm was tempered by a constructive sense reminiscent of Tagore who assigned priority to society over state.[234] It is not possible to say whether Bose was conversant with Tagore's ideas at this point of time, but he has himself testified that when he returned to India accompanied by Tagore, he gathered from him that Tagore was in favour of constructive activity.[235]

While tracing the roots of Bose's future ideas to his early thoughts in 1921, it is necessary to remember that direct connections cannot often be established. Prof. Sankari Prasad Basu is of the opinion that Bose's concept of National Planning originated as far back as 1921.[236] It is true that when Bose propounded his concept of planning in 1938, he stressed on many issues like a research department, etc., on which he had expressed himself in 1921. However, it would be far fetched to say that he had already formulated his ideas on National Planning in 1921. However the foundation of Bose's capacity for planned thinking was laid in 1921. His letters to C.R. Das revealed the appreciable level of maturity he had attained. They also indicated the course that Bose would follow in his future political life.

If Bose's political career is to be judged in its totality, the early moulding becomes important. No one factor can be isolated as the most crucial one. The combined impact of all the factors mentioned above helped to shape his political outlook. These factors often complemented each other but occasionally worked at cross-purposes. However, their overall impact was to create the orientational and intellectual setting for Bose's future leadership. Secondly, it is impossible to form a comprehensive view of Bose's political career without reference to the influences he imbibed in his early youth reflections of which can be found even during INA years. It is therefore necessary to note the close link between the early phase of Bose's life, (1897-1921), his political career in India (1921-41) and the final phase abroad after his departure from India (1941-45), instead of viewing them separately.

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225. Ibid, 213.
226. Personal Interview with Chittabarata Palit, Calcutta on June 21, 1999.
227. See Bose, n. 1, p. 215.
228. Ibid, p. 216.
229. Ibid. *Dristibhangi Sarad Sankhya* (Calcutta), 1999, p. 21.
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stirring up the masses and propaganda for making them aware of different issues.

231. Prashanta Kumar Ghosh,"Subhhas Chandrer Rashtrachintar Bibartane Taruner Swapner Prashangikata", in *Sudakshina*, (Calcutta), Vol. 8, Netaji Sankhya, 1998, p. 329. Personal Interview with Prasanta Kumar Ghosh, Calcutta, on June 21, 1999.

232. Ibid, pp. 328-329.

233. Avra Ghosh, "Subhas Chandrer Guru Anweshan", *Chaturanga* (Calcutta), June 1998, p. 10.

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Chapter - III

Germination Of The Seeds (1921- 27)

The period under consideration, witnessed the initial flowering of Bose's inborn qualities. He spent a large part of the time in internment and was active on the stage of national life for even less than four years. Still he was able to make his mark as the trusted lieutenant of C.R. Das and attained fame and acclamation as an activist and nationalist though his reputation did not extend beyond the confines of Bengal. Bose's association with the Swarajya Party, his role as educationist, his stint as journalist, his brief but meaningful tenure as C.E.O. of Calcutta Municipal Corporation and finally his intellectual and political evolution during his internment at Mandalay, all combined together to provide the prelude for the efflorescence of his leadership qualities in the succeeding stages of his eventful life.

The most significant feature of the closing years of the second decade of the twentieth century was the emergence of Gandhi as a national leader and his espousal of mass nonviolent direct action as the major technique in the struggle against British imperialism. In 1917-18, he had already experimented with this method at Champaran, Ahmedabad and Kheda, in each of which, his *satyagraha* had been successful. In 1919-20, he had begun to champion the *Khilafat* cause and had linked this issue with the wrongs perpetrated by the British in Punjab during the Rowlatt Act-*Satyagrahas* as well as the issue of *swaraj,* and had begun to plan the Non-cooperation movement.[1] Bose, however, had many questions about Gandhian techniques.

Bose returned to India in a surcharged atmosphere where the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation movements were motivating the students to leave educational institutions and lawyers to boycott law courts. Ordinary people were urged to boycott British goods and the last stage of the movement was to entail non-payment of taxes. He obtained an interview with Gandhi to ascertain his plan of action on July 16, 1921. During the meeting, Bose requested him to clarify certain points. Firstly, he wished to know how the different activities of the Congress were going to culminate in the last stage of the campaign, that is the non-payment of taxes. Secondly, how could mere non-payment of taxes force the government to concede defeat? Finally, what was the basis of Gandhi's promise to the people of *swaraj* within one year?[2]

Bose's questions to Gandhi reveal his objective and rational approach to the problem at hand. He did not have unquestioning faith in Gandhi and was not prepared to follow Gandhi without first being sure of the efficacy of his methods.

Bose was satisfied by Gandhi's answer to the first question, that with the intensification of the *Khadi* campaign,[3] the stage would be set for civil disobedience with the result that thousands of people would court arrest. Prisons would overflow and the movement would culminate in the non-payment of taxes.[4] Gandhi's replies to his other two questions failed to convince Bose, He was non-committal on whether the boycott movement would pressurize the government into making concessions. Bose felt that either Gandhi did not want to give out his secrets prematurely or he did not have a clear conception of the tactics by which the government would be pressurized to make concessions.[5]

Bose was also not convinced that Gandhi's promise that *swaraj* would come about, in one year, would be kept. Bose felt that such slogans would cause utter disillusionment if they were not given effect to. As a result, the leadership would forfeit its credibility Bose felt that it was a question of faith so far as Gandhi was concerned, and was not based on rational judgement.[6] He, thus, returned with the impression that Gandhi's plan lacked clarity and that Gandhi himself did not have a clear idea of the successive stages through which the movement would lead to independence.[7]

This, however, does not imply that his first meeting with Gandhi led to mutual alienation although the outcome was unsatisfactory for Bose. According to Bose's biographer, Mihir Bose, the Gandhi magic had not worked with Bose.[8] When Bose accepted Gandhi's leadership, it was in a critical spirit and not with blind faith. His nephew Subrata Bose has opined that Gandhi realized after the first meeting, that Bose had not accepted his explanations whole-heartedly, a view shared by Bose's biographer Huge Toye.[9] In that sense, this meeting was significant because it may have had its repercussions on the future evolution of Gandhi Bose relationship.

Bose's nephew, Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose, is of the opinion that Bose was unjust to Gandhi in ascribing vagueness to his plans, because Gandhi had brought about mass awakening through his techniques of struggle. His focus was on creating an intense anti British feeling, which would pressurize the government to negotiate with the Congress.[10] However, from Bose's letter to his friend, Kshetresh Chaterjee, written from Cambridge on February 2,

1921, it is known that he did not underrate Gandhi's role in mass mobilization and observed that "Gandhi is a man of the times."[11]

According to the noted scholar Professor Sankari Prasad Basu. Bose had developed revolutionary inclinations in England and was also not a believer in non-violence. Hence, his first meeting with Gandhi was doomed to be a failure, because before meeting Gandhi, he had developed a mindset opposed to that of Gandhi.[12]

There is ample material, both primary and secondary, to corroborate this view. While Bose was in England, he had privately remarked to his friend. Dilip Kumar Roy, that the British never feared Gandhi and his spinning wheel. They were scared of the practitioners of the cult of the bomb, like Jatin Mukherjee, Madame Cama, Aurobindo Ghosh and Savarkar etc. Moreover, he felt that no country was ever liberated by non-violence nor would ever be.[13] Thus, it appears that Bose was of the opinion that India's freedom would not be achieved through non-violence. However, according to Dilip Kumar Roy. Bose wanted to utilize Gandhian methods as far as practicable although he did not endorse his creed of non-violence.[14]

He must have realized that a violent revolution at that point of time was not feasible and the only logical option was to make the fullest use of Gandhian methods.[15] Secondly, Bose appreciated Gandhi's stature as a mass leader, and realized the necessity to communicate with him, After meeting Gandhi, Bose met C.R. Das, who, at that time, was the most reputed leader of Bengal and with whom he had interacted through correspondence from Cambridge.

Bose, C. R. Das and the Non-Cooperation Movement

Bose's first meeting with C.R. Das was decisive as evident from his own writings. He felt that "Here was a man who knew what he was about, who could give all that he had and who could demand from others, all they could give, a man to whom, youthfulness was not a shortcoming but a virtue... I felt that I had found a leader and I meant to follow him."[16] It thus appears, that C.R. Das was able to make a much greater impression on Bose's mind than Gandhi, Bose immediately accepted him as a mentor. On the other hand, he never truly accepted the discipleship of Gandhi after his first meeting with

him. Bose's political career began as the trusted lieutenant of C.R. Das. In this connection it may be noted that Bose had once met C.R. Das earlier on after the Oaten incident at Presidency College when he along with of some of his colleagues went to C.R. Das (who was then a distinguished lawyer) to seek his legal advice. Das was reportedly impressed by Bose's spirited ways which cemented their close rapport later on.[17] It may be inferred that C.R. Das tacitly supported the cause of the students in the Oaten incident because there is no evidence of his ever having condemned the students. This must have attracted Bose towards him.

C.R. Das established the Calcutta National College in January 1921, to further the cause of national education. It must be mentioned that national education had a larger tradition in Bengal and had been a major issue during the anti-partition movement. This was a cause that Bose could identify with, perhaps more than the spinning wheel and it also coincided with his emergent ideas on constructive nationalism. From the testimony of Bhupendra Kumar Dutta, a noted revolutionary of the Jugantar group, it is known that he and Hemanta Kumar Sarkar proposed the name of Bose as Principal of the College and C.R. Das accordingly entrusted him with the task.[18] Bose made zealous efforts to develop national education, at the same time, his decision to participate in the non-cooperation movement, did not allow him sufficient time to devote to education though he sustained his interest in it throughout his life. He presided over the National Education Conference at Midnapore, in 1923 where he gave a detailed blueprint of national education. In the first place, he placed emphasis on the teaching of national history, religion, ideals and society. The aim of education, he felt should not be to imitate the system in operation in London University but rather, to uphold India's distinctive ideal and culture.[19]

Secondly, the system of education, he iterated, should be made accessible to all, irrespective of religion and caste. Inspired by the ideal of universalism, Bose said that, students belonging to different religions must follow their respective missions preserving their religious distinctiveness but ultimately converge at the feet of the same deity. Without creating common field of education, no scheme of national education would succeed. Moreover, the vanguards of the system ought to inspire the students to be courageous, truthful, patriotic and selfless. Cultural and practical training should be imparted to them, as they were both necessary for becoming a true man.[20]

Thirdly, Bose was of the opinion that students should be encouraged

to undertake social work like the establishment of societies for the service or the poor and the needy, the procurement of funds for orphans, etc.[21] The influence or Vivekananda's ideals is quite evident here. Moreover, Bose's personal experiences as a social worker were an additional source of inspiration.

Furthermore, Bose advocated manual training which he considered to be the key to the development of the creative faculties of young students.[22] When Bose was imprisoned at Mandalay, he wrote in the same vein to Haricharan Bagchi in an undated letter in 1926, that, without manual training, education is rendered basically defective. The pleasure that one gets by making something with his own hands, is a rare pleasure in this world... Such activity will promote originality and the development of student's personality.[23] Here one can perceive the impact of Tagore who had set up the Vishwa Bharati University at Santiniketan which was an example of the constructive phase of the *swadeshi* movement in Bengal. At Santiniketan, Tagore had tried to promote his own educational ideals.

He wished to make education conducive to the broadening of the mind and the building up of character. He further wanted to make education enjoyable rather than cumbersome.[24] Moreover, in his aforesaid speech, Bose specifically referred to Tagore's institution as his role model.[25]

Though Bose's tenure as Principal of the National College was very brief, yet it left a lasting impression on his mind. He reaffirmed the thoughts, which he expressed at the National Education Conference at Midnapore, in many students' conferences over which he presided in the future. However, as the political movement picked up tempo, Bose jumped into it along with C.R. Das. He decided to follow his mentor, C.R. Das, who participated energetically in the *Khadi* campaign although he had earlier questioned the efficacy of non-cooperation and had wished to participate in the council elections following the Government of India Act, 1919, with the idea of bringing the government to a deadlock from within. His wife and son also courted arrest. Bose noted that so many volunteers were enlisted for the campaign that within a few days, the prisons overflowed and much consternation was created in the government circles.[26]

The Congress also decided to organize a countrywide *hartal* against the proposed visit of the Prince of Wales to India, scheduled for November 17,1921. The *hartal* was a great success in Calcutta, where Bose took a leading part.[27] In December 1921, Lord Reading, the Viceroy, communicated

with C.R.Das and proposed a compromise offering to withdraw a notification which had declared illegal, the Congress Volunteer organizations and to release all prisoners, if the Congress withdraw its boycott campaign against the Prince of Wales. He also proposed to summon a Round Table Conference to settle India's future constitution.[28]

After long deliberations, C.R. Das and Bose agreed to the compromise formula the logic being that since there was no possibility of fulfilment of Gandhi's promise of *swaraj* within one year, the Congress badly needed some face saving concession from the government. In this sense, C.R. Das, according to Bose's testimony, considered the offer of the Viceroy, a Godsend and felt that even if the proposed Round Table Conference was not a success, the Congress could resume the fight at any time and it would command greater prestige and public confidence.[29]

Gandhi, however, was initially not agreeable to the proposal. He had been conducting the Non-cooperation Movement in conjunction with the Khilafat movement. The Khilafat leaders Mohammed and Shaukat Ali had tried to extend non-cooperation into the armed forces by giving the call to Indian Muslims, to leave the army, They had been imprisoned for this and despite Gandhi's request that they too, should be released, the Viceroy did not concede this demand. By the time that Gandhi relented, and agreed to consider the Viceroy's proposal, the Viceroy had changed his mind. In the words of Bose, C.R. Das was beside himself with anger and disgust. The chance of a lifetime, he said, had been lost.[30]

The eminent historian, Dr. Amales Tripathi, has contended that C.R.Das's expectations about the proposals of Lord Reading were not realistic because his actual, intention was to slacken the tempo of the movement through false promises.[31] However, C. R. Das wanted the compromise because the option of resuming the struggle in case the government went back on its word was always there. On the other land the credibility to the people may have been forfeited, if the Non-cooperation Movement did not lead to *Swaraj* within a year.

Both Bose and C.R. Das were in prison when the non-cooperation movement gathered momentum in 1922. However, Gandhi suddenly halted the movement following the eruption of violence at Chauri Chaura on February 4, 1922. Bose had serious objections to this as did many other Congress leaders especially younger ones, like Jawaharlal Nehru. According to Bose, "To sound the order of retreat just when public enthusiasm was

reaching the boiling point, was nothing short of a national calamity.[32] He noted further that, C.R. Das was overwhelmed with anger and sorrow at the way Mahatma Gandhi was repeatedly "bungling".[33] The withdrawal of the Non-cooperation Movement made Bose increasingly critical of Gandhi and apart from the abrupt stoppage of the movement, the decision to call off the movement was taken unilaterally by Gandhi without consulting the representatives of the different provinces. Bose described Gandhi's decision as 'the dictator's decree.'[34] He appears to have had a lurking suspicion as far hack as the early 1920 that Gandhi had assumed, the role of a dictator in the Congress. The roots of his final break with Gandhi in 1939, where he rebelled against what he considered to be totalitarian tendencies in the Congress[35] may thus be traced back to 1922. On this point, Bose was in perfect agreement with C.R. Das.

After his release from internment, C.R. Das set up the Swarajya Party, which signified a break with the Gandhian policy. The Congress under Gandhi had boycotted the Council formed under the Government of India Act of 1919. C.R. Das as mentioned earlier, had wished to enter the Councils and make them unworkable from within. After the calling off of the Non-cooperation Movement, Das decided to go ahead with his objective of opposing Gandhi's wish to keep away from the councils and engage in constructive work in the villages. In any case, Gandhi had been arrested on March 10, 1922 and there were many leaders who wished to try a different option. Bose participated energetically in the activities of the Swarajya Party as the lieutenant of C.R. Das.

Bose and the Swarajya Party

As a Swarajya Party activist Bose made his mark in various platforms of life, which stood him in good stead in future. His experience as C.E.O. greatly facilitated his subsequent endeavours as Mayor of the C.M.C. His journalistic background proved significant in the last phase of his political life in India when he brought out his own Forward Bloc daily. The underlying continuity in his life_is clearly manifested here.

Bose as a Journalist

C.R. Das, like Bose, believed in the efficacy of journalism as a powerful medium in the cause of nationalism. He made Bose editor of the Bengali daily *Banglar Katha*, and also entrusted him with the organization of an English paper, *Forward*, which was launched in October 1923. C.R. Das tried to give shape to Bose's suggestion in his letters to him from Cambridge, for the organization of a propaganda network, by appointing Bose the Secretary of the Propaganda Department of the Bengal Provincial State Committee Das, too realized the need to acquaint common people with the objectives and programmes of the movement.[36]

Bose was not only entrusted with the editorship of the *Forward* and *Banglar Katha*, but was also associated actively with two other important Bengali dailies, *Atmashakti* and *Bijoli*. Bose wrote a number of editorials and articles where he laid particular emphasis on the mobilization of the labour and the peasantry in the cause of the nationalist struggle, upgradation of the mass and the techniques and strategies of struggle against British imperialism.

He also launched a scathing attack on the repressive policies of the British government. Here, Bose was evidently influenced by the advocacy of *swaraj* for the masses by C.R. Das at the Gaya Congress of 1922, where C.R. Das had noted that, "My experience has convinced me that the labour and the peasantry of India today are, if anything, more eager to attain *swaraj* than the so-called middle and educated classes."[37] This fit in appropriately with Bose's mode of thinking, because ever since his days at Cambridge, Bose had been thinking in terms of a labour movement.[38] A new dimension was now added, the peasantry. He wanted to develop the labour and peasant movements in conjunction as evident from an editorial written by him in *Atmashakti,* in which he wrote that, "these two classes, when united, could work miracles", and in the same editorial, he also spoke of organizing the peasant society on a strong economic foundation.[39] He also expressed himself strongly against the system of 'permanent settlement', whereby the *mahajans* or money lenders pauperized the peasantry through fraudulent means and also evicted them from their land.

In this connection he spoke eloquently in favour of land reforms.[40] In all his subsequent speeches and writings, the interests of the peasantry figured prominently and his fundamental position was reaffirmed in his

presidential speech at the Haripura Congress of 1938. The influence of C.R. Das in further shaping his views on peasant and labour movements has, therefore, to be acknowledged.

At the same time, it should be pointed out, that Bose was not in favour of a class struggle between the peasantry and the landlords, because he felt that such a class struggle would be prejudicial to the anti-imperialist movement. Speaking to the representatives of the Burdwan District Political Conference, he said that, though the demands of the peasantry were justified, yet if the peasants and the landlords fought each other, it would hamper unity, which was of foremost importance. Class struggle could come after freedom was won.[41] Leonard Gordon has referred to an editorial which appeared in *Banglar Katha* on February 17, 1923, which spoke of the need to bring about a reconciliation between the masses and the middle classes. Gordon agrees that though it is not certain that this editorial was written by Bose, it reflected his position that was a class-conciliation position. It may be inferred, that despite his appreciation of the interests and also the revolutionary potential of the labour and the peasantry, Bose did not subscribe to the Marxian theory of class struggle though he had developed a socialistic outlook. From the available source material it appears that Bose developed connections with communists at a personal level but this did not incline him towards communism.[42] The eminent communist scholar, Prof. Gautam Chattopadhyay, son of Bose's close friend, Kshitish Prasad Chattopadhyay, points out that between 1921-24, Bose was not attracted towards communism though he provided shelter to two communist revolutionaries, Abani Mukherjee and Santosh Mitra, who were hunted by the police. It is known further that in 1922, the police intercepted a letter from the Communist International inviting five Indians including Bose to attend the fourth Congress of the International. Professor Gautam Chattopadhyay is of the opinion that, Bose favoured socialism and identified himself with the oppressed classes but he had no class approach. He had admiration for Marx and Lenin but philosophically he was not a Marxist or a Leninist.[43] In this context, it may be repeated that Bose was first and foremost a nationalist and that he was not inclined towards the theory of class struggle because he felt that if it were waged simultaneously with the anti-imperialist struggle, neither would succeed.

Bose was' also prolific in his criticism of the repressive policies of the British government in his journalistic pieces. Some of his editorials in the

Forward, like, "Who Intimidates Whom?" "Bureaucracy is Buried Four Fathoms Deep", etc., reflected his consistent opposition to the British bureaucracy, and also his determination to counter the propaganda of pro-imperialist newspapers like, *The Statesman* that the Congress workers were terrorists, with reasoned evidence that it was the government which followed a policy of intimidation and terrorization.[44]

Whether Bose developed his idea of armed rebellion during 1921-24, deserves attention. Leonard Gordon cites an issue of the *Atmashakti,* dated February 10, 1923, which stated, "it is quite incomprehensible that one should remain nonviolent in all times and under all circumstances. No man will ever brand it as an act of bare impiety if we have to resort to brute force, to combat brute force with a view to secure freedom for our motherland."[45] Gordon argues that though this article was published before Bose came close to the *Atmashakti,* he shared the view expressed in it.[46] There is, however, no evidence to prove that, Bose in any of his articles or editorials, justified violence. At the same time, he was evidently not in favour of adhering to non-violence as an infallible creed. From the testimony of Bose's friend, Hemanta Kumar Sarkar, it is known that during the days of the Non-cooperation Movement, Bose had observed during a private get-together that non-violence could be given a trial without becoming totally non-violent.[47] Moreover, Bose came into close contact with the revolutionaries of Bengal during this period, who were confirmed believers in violence. His intimacy with the revolutionaries, particularly when he was Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation, incurred the suspicion of the British government. Bose's connections with revolutionaries in the first phase of his political life, requires a brief analysis in this respect.

Bose and the Revolutionaries of Bengal : -

Revolutionary terrorism had been a third stream in the freedom movement along with Moderate politics and Extremist militancy, especially in Bengal. In fact, during the Moderate phase, the alternative to Moderate "mendicancy" had actually been terrorism. Further, the lasting legacy of the *swadeshi* movement in Bengal, Punjab, Maharastra and Madras was also revolutionary terrorism. During the First World War, the only real challenge to British imperialism in India had come not from the Home Rule movement or the

combined demands of the Congress and the Muslim League, but from revolutionary terrorism with international circles, which failed because of lack of coordination and organization. In Bengal, where the Home Rule Movement was almost non-existent and where non-violence did not become deep-rooted, revolutionary martyrs were considered as heroes and revolutionary organizations attracted a large number of youths.[48]

Right through his political career, Bose was very close to the revolutionaries of Bengal. He encountered revolutionaries for the first time in his student life and was enamoured of them even before he joined politics, as evident from a private remark to Dilip Kumar Roy in England. that during his brief association with revolutionary circles, he realized they were the symbol of supreme sacrifice, valour and humanity, They were the first to wake up in a slumbering country and caused others to rise from their sleep. From the testimony of the noted revolutionary Kalicharan Ghosh, it is known that as far back as 1914, he came into contact with a group of revolutionaries known as "Chingripota" group in his native village Kodalia. After his return from England he held secret discussions with the members of the group like Surendra Mohan Ghosh, Bhupati Majumdar, etc. Bhupendra Kumar Dutta, the famous revolutionary of the Jugantar group, testifies that Bose came into contact with the famous revolutionary Jyotindranath Mukherjee in his early student life and was deeply influenced by him.[49]

It is also likely that Bose knew about the Indian revolutionaries abroad like Shyamaji Krishna Varma, Lala Hardayal, and Virendranath Chattopadhyay etc. Bhupendra Nath Dutta Committee under the Zimmerman Plan in collaboration with the German foreign office and an Indo-German-Turkish mission tried to stir up anti-British feelings among tribes near the Indo-German border. A Provisional Government of Free India was set up at Kabul with the help of Prince Amanullah by Mahendra Pratap, Barkatullah and Obeidullah Sindhi.[50] In the United States the Ghadr Party tried to create a spirit of revolt in the British Indian Army and stir up a revolution in the British colonies.[51] Though Bose has not referred to the aforesaid revolutionaries in his writings, yet he reportedly said to Dilip Kumar Roy that the British feared people like Madame Cama, Krishna Varma Savarkar, etc., much more than Gandhi.[52] In later years, Bose came into contact with Savarkar who directly inspired him to leave the country and conduct armed struggle from outside.[53] There appears to have been a meeting of minds between Bose and the Indian overseas revolutionaries who believed in

violent revolution and wanted to incite a spirit of revolt in the British Indian army though scholars differ on this issue. Professor Gautam Chattopadhyay draws a parallel between the activities of the overseas revolutionaries during the First World War and Bose's effort to stage an armed struggle during the Second World War. Dr. G.L. Adhya, Professor of History, National Council of Education, Research and Training, however contends that none of the overseas Indian revolutionaries masterminded any armed attack on the British Empire from outside. Moreover their activities took place when Bose was very young thus though as a sensitive student of history, he might have subsequently known about them, no direct comparison is logical.[54]

Bose's mentor, C.R. Das, though an adherent of the official Congress policy of non-violence, also had great admiration for the sacrifice and martyrdom of revolutionaries. C.R. Das realized that for the consolidation of the Swarajya Party in Bengal, the support and cooperation of revolutionaries was essential to get into power. The two major revolutionary groups in Bengal at that time were the Anushilan and the Jugantar. During the Non-cooperation Movement, the Jugantar had promised to desist from revolutionary violence for a period of one year and had sent Bhupendra Kumar Dutta and Jibanlal Chatterji as emissaries to Gandhi who reportedly welcomed the gesture and made it clear to them that his nonviolence was meant not for the weak but the strong.[55]

However, after the abrupt stoppage of the non-cooperation movement, both the Anushilan and the Jugantar groups yearned for a new programme. C.R. Das approached the Jugantar group through Bose and Srish Chandra Chatterji and the latter acted as the liaison between the former and the Jugantar group.[56] Though many of the Jugantar revolutionaries joined the Swarajya party, the Jugantar as a party, did not support it.

The Swarajya party attained a convincing electoral triumph in the Calcutta Municipal Corporation elections of 1924, and this was largely due to the support of the revolutionaries. According to a secret police report, "In 1924, the terrorist members of the Swarajya Party supported the candidature of Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose as Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation and it is noteworthy that after his appointment to that post, many jobs in the Corporation were given to terrorists."[57]

From the available evidence, it appears that Bose was possibly aware of some of the secret activities of the revolutionaries and was sympathetic towards their cause. When Gopinath Saha, a young activist of the Jugantar

group, murdered a Britisher mistaking him for the Police Commissioner Sir Charles Teggart and was subsequently hanged, Bose shed tears.[58] Another comrade of Bose, found him inquiring in whispers from a colleague whether Gopinath Saha would give out secrets under pressure.[59] From this, it may be logically surmised that though Bose may not have been directly involved in any revolutionary activity, he may have been aware of the secret plans and actions contemplated by the revolutionaries. Bose's connections with revolutionaries convinced them of his sympathy and support for their activities, and paved the way for his greater rapport with them in the next phase of his political career (1928-32) and thereafter.

Bose's affinity to the revolutionaries heightened the suspicions of the government about his complicity in acts of revolutionary violence. According to H.W. Hale, an officer of the Intelligence Bureau, "Several of the important leaders including Subhas Chandra Bose...who was believed to have been behind the plot to assassinate Sir Charles Teggart and who had given employment to a large number of Jugantar revolutionaries and ex-detenus the Calcutta Corporation were incarcerated under Regulation III of 1818."[60] According to a government document, there was reason to believe that Bose at the time of employing a member of revolutionaries in the Corporation had not overlooked the importance of the control of the Corporation by revolutionaries in the event of an armed uprising. The document mentioned that it was known from reliable sources that Bose was planning a spectacular outage that is, the throwing of a bomb in the Council Chamber in conjunction with Satyen Mitra. They had obtained an official plan of the building in pursuance of this plot and introduced fellow revolutionaries into the visitor's gallery of the Council House to arrange details.[61]

Bose's subsequent imprisonment was the result of the deepening suspicion of the government about his involvement in revolutionary conspiracies. Thus, he could not serve more than seven months as the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation, as he was arrested and deported to Mandalay. However, even within the short span of seven months he played an active part in municipal administration and politics, which requires emphasis.

Bose and the Calcutta Municipal Corporation

Bose's first term as Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation extended from May 17,1924 to December 12, 1924. Several reasons have been suggested to explain the decision of C.R. Das to prefer Bose as Chief Executive Officer ahead of other eligible candidates. According to Professor Manju Chattopadhyay, C.R. Das was impressed by the tireless devotion of Bose and his prompt response to the sufferings of the people.[62] Prof. Ashoke Kumar Mustasfi is of the opinion that C.R. Das was impressed by Bose's secular, democratic and national constructive outlook.[63] In addition to these two reasons, there appears to have been a third reason influencing C.R. Das's choice of Bose, and that is. Bose's father was associated the Cuttuck Municipality and municipal administration was something that Bose was acquainted with since childhood. C.R. Das was also aware of Bose's background as a social worker and believed that Bose, in the light of past experiences, would be able to render positive service to the poor and the needy.

As Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation, Bose proceeded to give effect to the ideas of C.R. Das in the distinct spheres of communal and municipal politics. C.R. Das was a firm believer in Hindu-Muslim unity and depended to a large extent on Muslim support for political ascendancy in Bengal. He accordingly forged the idea of a Hindu-Muslim pact known as the Bengal Pact of 1923, whereby Muslims would get 60 percent of the appointments in political areas where the Swarajists were elected to power. They were also promised a greater share of the appointments in the Calcutta Corporation if the Swarajists succeeded in getting a majority. This idea fell through at the Kakinada session of the Congress in 1923. Bose, however, emphatically supported C.R. Das and sought to implement the provisions of the Bengal Pact as Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation, after Swarajisis came to power in 1924. Out of 33 vacancies in the Corporation, 25 were filled up by Muslims.[64] Bose was severely criticized by newspaper like *Ananda Bazar Patrika,* which wrote for instance, on July 19,1924, that Bose had acted in an autocratic manner and filled up the vacancies according to his own sweet will.[65] However a large section of the Muslim press namely, the *Mohammadi* and *Mussalman* strongly supported him.[66] The Hindu members of the corporation upbraided Bose but he stood firm in the face of criticism and in a statement to the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* he defended

his stand saying that in the past, Hindus had enjoyed a sort of monopoly in matters of appointment. However, "The new Corporation standing for a new epoch had to respond to the spirit of the times... though it was sure to give rise to a certain amount of heart burning in the ranks of the Hindu candidates."[67] He added that "academic qualifications alone do not prove the real worth of a candidate. I have no Hindu-Muslim Pact before me but I have certainly taken cognizance of what I consider to be the just claims of the Muhammedans and in future propose to do so."[68]

It may be questioned in this connection, whether Bose considered the idea of The Bengal Pact, to be a practical one. From his determination to give shape to Hindu-Muslim unity, one gets the impression that he endorsed the rationale behind it Professor Gautam Chattopadhyay is the opinion that Bose was such a loyal admirer of C.R. Das that he considered himself duty bound to follow, his line, though it is not sure whether he considered the Bengal Pact practical. Had Bose not been in prison when the Bengal Pact broke up, he would have tried to save it though it is doubtful whether he would have succeeded. Dr. Rajat Kanta Roy indicates that Bose was the inheritor of the legacy of C.R. Das who introduced for the first time a breath of idealism in municipal affairs. Dr. Rajat Kanta Roy also shows that the Bengal Pact was fairly successful until the death of C.R. Das and was able to hold together the legislative combination of nationalists of the communities against the Government.[69] Recent scholars have tried to show that the idea of the Bengal Pact was unrealistic because Hindu-Muslim differences were too complex to be solved by mere concessions Furthermore, many Muslims were dissatisfied with the Swarajya party.[70] Bose evidently did not take into account, the complexity of the communal problem and was confident that communal unity could be fostered and the disenchantment of the Muslims could be overcome through a sustained and sincere effort. He did not favour a policy of appeasement of any particular community and even while providing concessions to the Muslims, did not support the idea of separate electorates for them. Dr. Nemai Sadhan Basu is of the opinion that reservation of jobs alone was insufficient to provide a lasting solution to socio-economic and religious problems. Both Bose and C.R. Das, he believes, were above all narrowness and pettiness and were inspired by a lofty ideal but they oversimplified the communal situation which had deeper roots than they imagined'.[71]

While there is considerable logic in the above argument, it needs to be remembered that the greater part of the Muslims cooperated with the Bengal Pact and the colonial rulers placed a in a tight corner because it went against their policy of divide and rule. From the testimony of the prominent Congress leader, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, C.R. Das was able to overcome in the fears and apprehensions of the Muslims of Bengal and was acclaimed their leader. Dr. G. L. Adhya makes the point that the Bengal Pact was formulated exclusively in view of the situation prevailing in Bengal at that time. Thus, it should not be judged in an all-India context. C.R. Das concluded that job reservation for Muslim would provide a temporary solution to the problem in Bengal and Bose too followed his line.[72] The Bengal Pact was therefore, not a totally utopian idea since it did garner considerable support from the Muslims. It must also be remembered that just as the mainstream freedom movement faced divergent trends in different provinces and among different classes at various times, the Muslim League policies were not universally acceptable to all Indian Muslims. Separate parties emerged in different provinces among-the Muslims and in each province, the political complexities were different.[73]

Bose must have supported the Pact on the basis of his observation of contemporary developments and was encouraged by the response of the Muslims. Moreover, Gandhi supported him in his journal, *Young India*, on July 31, 1924, saying that Bose's decision to reserve jobs for Muslims was creditable and added that appointments till then had not been made impartially and in many cases Hindus had influenced decisions in their favour. If the Hindus wished to see Indian free, they must be ready and willing to sacrifice in favour of their Mussalman and other breathren.[74] Bose's steadfast adherence to the spirit of the Bengal Pact even in the face of adverse criticism, reflected his confidence in the efficacy of his policy of concessional politics *vis a vis* the Muslim community, Whether the communal problem in Bengal would have been at least partially solved if C.R. Das had not died prematurely and whether the Bengal Pact would have been saved if Bose had been out of prison, are hypothetical questions. It may however, be safely concluded that both Bose and C.R. Das would have made a sincere effort to solve the problem as they saw fit if they had had the opportunity and they may have resorted to strategies other than pact formation if the situation so demanded.

It may be noted that while the Swarajya Party made an earnest effort through the Bengal Pact to create communal unity, one of its serious

drawbacks was the complete lack of any programme in its agenda of action for the removal of bitterness between the peasants and the landlords.[75]

As Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation, Bose envisaged an elaborate scheme of social welfare. He sought to translate into practice, C.R. Das's ideal of "seeing the poor as God" enunciated in his Mayoral address.[76] Bose addressed himself to a wide variety of social problems like compulsory primary education, development of slums, prevention of epidemics drainage system, milk supply, street lighting, etc. He was particularly interested in education because his involvement in the Non-cooperation Movement had prevented him from giving effect to his ideas on education. As Chief Executive Officer, he set up a number of primary schools whose number increased from a mere three to two hundred and fifty within ten years.

These catered to 50,000 slum children as well as children from poor and lower middle class, families. He also set up teacher's training schools.[77] Bose had assisted his friend Hemanta Kumar Sarkar in his early student life, in running a night school at Krishnanagar meant for children of indigent workers.[78] He had all along consistently advocated the dissemination of education among the poor and thus, his educational policy as Chief Executive Officer was attuned to the requirements of the poor and the needy.

Bose always had in mind, the idea of cooperative societies, as evident from his letter to C.R. Das from Cambridge stressing the need to form cooperative banks.[79] He also wrote to Gopabandhu Das from Mandalay on April 7, 1926, that agricultural development as well as health problems like eradication of malaria, would be possible only through cooperative societies.[80] As C.E.O., Bose arranged for cooperative stores to enable the employees of the Corporation to obtain their necessities at a cheap rate.

Bose retained an abiding interest in municipal administration throughout his career and the roots of his idea of municipal socialism articulated in the mid-thirties may be traced to his tenure as C.E.O. He wrote to Santosh Kumar Basu on April 26, 1926 that municipal government should be included in the curriculum for Political Science in Calcutta University.[81] This reveals his intention to create among students, an awareness of municipal affairs.

To sum up, during his brief tenure as C.E.O., Bose tried to translate into practice his idea of constructive nationalism. Bose was arrested on October 25, 1924, and deported to Mandalay. While he was imprisoned at Mandalay, he expressed his thoughts in his correspondence as well as in his prison diaries on a variety of topics - social, economic, religious and

political. A close examination of his prison thoughts reveals a continuity in his thought process.

Bose at Mandalay

Bose's internment at Mandalay was a landmark in his intellectual and political evolution. In the first place, he elaborated on his philosophy of the youth movement which he had first expressed in his essay, "dreams of Youth," written in 1923. He visualized a positive role for the youth in the national movement. He was categorical on the point that "the predominant element which goes to the making of an empire is love of adventure for its own shake. Not only for establishing empires but also for self-defence a nation must be aggressive. No nation can be aggressive if it lacks love of adventure."[82] Bose evidently thought that a spirit of adventure would create in the youth, the requisite mental make-up for combating British imperialism. Mere political indoctrination would not spur them into action without the necessary psychological preparation.

Bose lamented the fact that students in India were sickly in appearance and devoid of enthusiasm and vivacity, in stark contrast to European students. They tended to give up mainly practices like *lathi* play, wrestling, swimming across rivers, etc, and hence became insipid and morose. Subsequently, they lost the traits of strength and masculinity.[83] The roots of Bose's philosophy of robust optimism and activism with which he inspired the youth at the All India Youth Congress in Calcutta on December 25,1928,[84] may be traced back to his prison writings at Mandalay. Secondly, it may inferred that Bose's ideas in this context owed something to the denunciation of Bengalis as a race of cowards by Thomas Babington Macaulay in 1841, which Bose has mentioned in his book, *The Indian Struggle*.[85] He took serious exception to Macaulay's view that "The physical organization of the Bengali is feeble even to the point of effeminacy. His pursuits are sedentary, his limbs delicate, his movements languid. During many ages, he has been trampled upon by men of bolder and more hardy deeds."[86] Macaulay made some other charges like forgery, perjury and falsehood against the Bengalis, [87] but Bose was more interested in countering first and foremost, the charge of effeminacy and unmanliness. Bose may have been influenced here by Sarala Devi, the proponent of physical culture in Bengal in the twentieth

century. There is evidence to prove that Bose knew Sarala Devi as he spoke at a Women's Conference at Woodburn Park Calcutta on March 17, 1928, which was presided by Sarala Devi.[88] Though he took exception to the indictment of Macaulay, he also revealed an element of self-criticism and was even prepared to emulate the British by imbibing their spirit of adventure. Bose wanted to metamorphose the outlook of the Bengalis through a reassertion of the martial spirit. It may be inferred that though Bose did not openly advocate violent struggle it was at the back of his mind, His advocacy of *lathi* play, etc., indicates that he did not visualize non-violence as the only means to liberate India from British rule. Moreover, immediately after his release from prison, Bose sought to translate his ideas about the youth movement into practice and organized a demonstration of militarism at the Calcutta Congress of 1928, through a volunteer's army. The roots of his idea of the volunteer movement may also be traced to his prison writings. Though Bose has never acknowledged it yet it may be inferred that he derived his idea of the need to foster a spirit of manliness from Vivekananda who constantly exhorted the youth to develop a fearless spirit. Vivekananda wanted to arouse the people who were full of morbidity through *shakti* worship, worship of Ramchandra, the martial hero of the epic Ramayana and sword fights.[89]

In his prison correspondence, Bose also enunciated his views on India's economic problems. In three undated letters to Anil Chandra Biswas, Joint Secretary of the Dakshin Kalikata Sevak Samiti, in 1925, he spoke of the need to develop cottage industries. Even if they did not prove cost effective, they would be conducive to the inculcation of self- reliance, dignity of labour and eradication of the problem of mendicancy.[90] It is noteworthy that while Bose become vocal in his advocacy of scientific modernization immediately after his release, his prison thoughts on India's economic life were confined to an advocacy of cottage industries. This was a logical continuation of his thoughts expressed at the National Education Conference at Midnapore, in 1923, where he criticized machine-based factories, which could create machines but not men. Furthermore, it would create the problem of unemployment.[91] Whether this was due to the direct impact of the Non-cooperation Movement with its emphasis on *Khadi* cannot be ascertained because Bose has not expressed himself on this point. He spoke in highly appreciative terms about the *Khadi* campaign at the Maharasthra Provincial Conference on May 3,1928 and acknowledged that *Khadi* had provided a

solution to the food problem. However, he added that its appeal could not be universal.[92] Thus, Bose was never as ardent a supporter of *Khadi* as Gandhi. It may be questioned here whether Bose's subsequent emphasis on scientific industrialization signified any self-contradiction. Professor Sankari Prasad Basu is of the opinion that Bose realized that large-scale industrialization was a distant hope at that point of time. Thus, it was futile to excite the public with slogans about mechanization. On the other hand cottage industries could by fostering self-reliance, indirectly contribute to the creation of national consciousness which routinized factory life could not achieve.[93] However, Bose has not expressed himself specifically on this point, and therefore, the aforesaid view can be taken as hypothetical. But Professor Basu has also mentioned that Bose was influenced by C.R. Das who was against industrialization.[94] This appears to be a plausible explanation because he followed the line of C.R. Das in almost every respect. It may be mentioned that he did not actually deviate from his fundamental stand in the years to come, because even when he championed the cause of economic planning, he did not neglect cottage industries. For instance, in his Haripura address, he started that in a country like India, there would be enough room for cottage industries.

Bose also thought deeply about India's social problems, He wrote to Haricharan Bagchi on July 3, 1925, that the goal of social service was not organized charity but rather to induce the poor and the needy to do some positive work for the society. The physically disabled should not however be compelled to work. If a widow could not find time for additional work after her household duties, she should not be pressurized to work. However, indolence did not deserve indulgence under any circumstances.[96] Bose also wanted to root out the problem of beggars though it was a long-term problem. He did not wish to see India as a race of beggars.[97] It may be inferred that, social problems were an integral part of Bose's political plans and he wanted to root them out through a concerted multifaceted effort. It reveals a continuity in his thought because even after many years of active involvement in politics, Bose did not lose sight of the needs of society. This may be attributed predominantly to the influence of Vivekananda.

At Mandalay, Bose also expressed his thoughts on education and prescribed practical guidance for the same. In an undated letter to Haricharan Bagchi in 1926, he remarked that good teachers were those who could see things with affection and sympathy from the point of view of the students.[98]

In an undated letter to Bhupendra Nath Banerjee in 1926, he recommended technical education and the opening of a school for children belonging to lower castes.[99] Bose was consistent in his advocacy of a broad based, equalitarian and employment oriented educational system. He preferred the opening of laboratories in schools to teach the students the method to prepare medicines and also technical institutes for developing manufacturing skills for the generation of employment potential.[100] Thus, Bose's educational and economic thought were closely interlinked.

Finally, Bose's thoughts on religion deserve particular mention in this context. At Mandalay, he spearheaded a prisoners' movement to induce the government of Burma to the permit the prisoners to celebrate *Durga puja* in prison. His logic was that in Alipur Central Jail, a sum of Rs.1200 per annum was spent for religious worship by Christian convicts. Thus, the detenus in Burmese prisons ought to enjoy the same facility.[101] Here, Bose championed the cause of equality of religious rights. Secondly, he was of the view that "To us Orientals, religion is neither a social convention nor an intellectual luxury. It is life itself. Religion is woven into the very texture of one's daily and social life."[102] Recognizing the essentially spiritual foundation of the Indian civilization, he said that, "In spite of our misery and degradation, India still lives. She lives because her soul is immortal her soul is immortal because she believes in religion. We have lost much. Political freedom is no more. Economic independence is a thing of the past. ... But we still have our religion."[103] He added that "Secularism and its offspring cynicism have well-nigh crushed out of existence, the soul of Europe...The materialistic civilization of the West is today sitting like a nightmare on India's bosom."[104] To sum up Bose's thoughts expressed during his term imprisonment at Mandalay reveal his reflective and perceptive mind. Some of his ideas may be considered relevant to present day India, particularly his thoughts on India's socio-economic problem, many of which still persist.

The period under consideration encompasses the first phase of Bose's political life which nay be subdivided into two phases, the phase of incessant activity extending from 1921 to 1924 and the phase of thought which relates to his tenure of internment at Mandalay (1924-27) During the first phase, Bose made his mark as an educationist, journalist, political activist social worker and municipal administrator. During the second phase, he devoted himself to serious contemplative study of India's manifold problems, which figured in his thought in either an explicit or implicit form. On the political

side, he appears to have become disillusioned with the method of non-violence as the ultimate means of winning India's freedom and this become implicit in his advocacy of *Lathi* play, etc. in his prison diaries. On the socioeconomic side, Bose's emphasis on the eradication of India's socio-economic problems became explicit in his prison correspondence. Thus, the phases of thought and action were, inseparably linked together in the life of Bose. While he was a Congress worker, he energetically devoted himself to constructive activities, which was the predominant feature of the phase of his political life. Even in later years when India's liberation became Bose's foremost concern, he did not lose sight of the constructive aspect of nationalism, which was manifested in the articulation of his vision of the future Indian state. He also retained his interest in education and journalism in his subsequent political life when he not only wrote prolifically but also addressed himself to educational problems. The idea of Hindu-Muslim unity, which he derived partly from personal experiences and partly from C.R. Das, who believed in the method of pact formation (the Bengal Pact for example), was continued by him in future. Bose followed the tradition of pact formation as exemplified by pacts forged by him with the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League in 1940 which reflected the direct influence of C.R. Das, Since his imprisonment prevented him from giving shape to his ideas he occupied himself during his incarceration with the task of reexamination and elaboration of these for further application in a fuller and more mature form. The next phase of his political life reflected the same ideas he had developed in the initial phase of his baptism in politics.

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2. Subhas Chandra Bose, "The Indian Struggle" in Sisir Kumar Bose, ed., *Netaji Collected Works,* Vol. II (Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta. 1981), p. 52.

3. Gandhi emphasized *Khadi,* that is, handicraft industry from the very beginning and the spinning wheel became a symbol of his movement. It is important to note the impact that such ordinary symbols as "Khadi" and "salt" could have on mass mobilization.
4. See Bose, n. 2, pp. 58-59.
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6. Ibid.
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14. Ibid, p. 299.
15. Ibid.
16. See Bose, n.2, p. 60.
17. Aparna Devi, daughter of C.R.Das testifies to this. Basanti Devi wife of C.R.Das corroborates the version of Bose's meeting with C.R. Das but says nothing about Das's appreciative words about Bose. However it is quite possible that Das admired the courage and zeal displayed by Bose as a young student leader. Aparna Devi, *Manush Chittaranjan* (Indian Associated Publishing Co Ltd. Calcutta, 1955), p. 191. Krishna Basu, "Basanti Devir Kache Shona Kahini" in Krishna Basu, ed., *Prasanga Subhas Chandra* (Ananda Publishers, Calcutta, 1993), p. 57.
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Chapter - IV

Graduation To Leadership (1928-33)

In the first phase of Bose's political career, he had been more or less a lieutenant of C.R. Das. In the second phase, he emerged as both regional and national leader. Bose's political views became more focussed in this period, especially his ideas on the youth movement, his conception of militarism and his response to the communal problem. His connections with revolutionaries may also have helped shape his political thought. These developments will be analyzed in this chapter together with the flowering of Bose's political ideology while he was Mayor of Calcutta Corporation, when he developed his concept of municipal socialism and also a clear vision of India's future.

During this period, the workers and peasants' movements gathered momentum. The communist movement had also begun to emerge as a new trend in India's nationalist movement. Further revolutionary activities had become widespread not only in Bengal but also in Punjab. Bose evinced a keen interest in all these movements though he adhered to the policy of the mainstream Congress movement. His association with the parallel streams of the nationalist struggle greatly influenced his political evolution. The most significant aspect of the Congress policy, in the decade of the thirties, was the launching of the civil disobedience struggle under the leadership of Gandhi. Bose recognized the impact of civil disobedience, though he was critical of Gandhi's decision to suspend the movement following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931 and his subsequent participation in the Second Round Table Conference in England in 1931.

Throughout the period under consideration, Bose was ceaselessly active, but he also displayed an intellectual and thoughtful element in his diagnosis of some of India's future problems and his projection of the Indian state and society of the future. This served as a prelude to his subsequent ideological evolution. In the spheres of both thought and action, Bose displayed a distinctive style of functioning, which differentiated him from his contemporaries and predecessors.

Bose on the Issue of Complete Independence

In all his speeches and writings during the said period, Bose expressed his unwavering belief in the urgency of complete independence. He became a vocal exponent of the idea of complete independence and sought to propagate it through the medium of the Independence of India League, which was formed largely due to the effort of the revolutionaries. The Congress was divided on the question of dominion status *versus* complete independence. Gandhi was not, at that point of time, prepared to think in terms of complete independence, while the left wing led by Nehru and Bose were strongly in favour of it and here, they were backed by the revolutionaries. At the Madras Congress of 1927, the revolutionaries persuaded Nehru to move a resolution on complete independence which he himself wished for and which was subsequently passed.[1] Gandhi did not oppose the resolution, but made it clear that he did not appreciate the idea in a statement in *Young India* on January 12, 1928, saying that, "I submit that *Swaraj* is a satisfying goal for all time. . ..Personally I crave not for independence but I long for freedom from the English yoke."[2] However, Gandhi could not ignore the potential strength of the left wing. According to Bose, the Madras Congress was significant not only because of its resolution on independence but also because it appointed representatives of the left wing in the Working Committee, including Nehru and Bose himself.[3] It has been suggested by Professor Nemai Pramanik that, Gandhi had to 'swallow the bitter pill of complete independence at Madras, because at that time, he was not sure of his control over the Congress machinery. So he did not like to take the risk of defeat standing against the rising powerful left force in the Congress.'[4] Thus, by the end of the decade of the twenties, the left wing had accumulated sufficient force so as to induce Gandhi to accept the independence resolution, though under duress.

The conflict between the left wing and the Gandhian wing became acute over the issue of dominion status *versus* complete independence, with the publication of the Motilal Nehru Committee Report in August 1928. However, according to the testimony of Bose, a private meeting was held by the left wingers at Lucknow, on the eve of the All Parties Conference to be convened there in August 1928, where it was suggested by Nehru and Bose that instead of dividing the house, the left wingers would simply voice their protest at

the Conference and there-after proceed to organize an Independence League to conduct active propaganda in favour of complete independence.[5] Subsequently the League was inaugurated at Delhi in November, 1928.[6] The Working Committee assured Bose and Nehru that they could carry on with the League without any conflict with the Congress policy.[7] He was thus not a rebel against the Congress at this point of time and was conscious that internal dissensions would reduce the strength of the Congress, which would be detrimental for the national movement.

Secondly, the idea of the Independence League was not exclusively the brainchild of Bose and Nehru. It was originally developed by the revolutionaries of the Anushilan Samiti and the Jugantar group like Trailokya Chakravarti, Pratul Chandra Ganguly, Jadugopal Mukherjee and Surendra Mohan Ghosh at Midnapore Central Jail, in 1926, where it was decided that the two leading revolutionary organizations would work unitedly through the League with Bose as their chairman.[8] Ultimately, Srinivas Iyenger became the President of the League and Bose and Nehru functioned as joint secretaries.

Bose's sincere efforts to propagate the idea of complete independence, proved successful in the provincial conferences of Punjab, Bengal, Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, etc. and each of them reaffirmed their faith in complete independence.[9]

During this period, Bose's activities were not confined within Bengal but acquired an all-India dimension. During the first phase of his political career, his activities were limited to Bengal but the second phase witnessed the evolution of Bose from a regional nationalist to a leader of national stature.

Moreover, Bose's activities as an exponent of complete independence had a wider aspect. He made a distinction between independence and freedom, the former implying India's political emancipation and the latter symbolizing freedom from all kinds of bondage, social, economic cultural, etc. Thus, in the manifesto of the League drafted by Bose and published on October 2, 1928, it was clearly stated that the need of the hour was a party, which would stand for political independence, social equality and economic freedom in the true sense. India would have to achieve socio-economic democracy rather than political democracy alone.[10] The manifesto enunciated the programme of the League in clear terms emphasizing large scale production through machine industry, nationalization of the basic industries, nationalization of railways, shipping and air transport industries, liquidation

of landlordism, elimination of agricultural indebtedness, abolition of untouchability, emancipation of women, etc.[11] The manifesto foreshadowed in many ways, the future blue print of India which he provided as President of the Congress at Haripura in 1938.[12]

Bose appears to have appreciated the wider implications of independence and wanted to inspire his countrymen with a vision of the future. His concept of complete freedom was first formulated in the manifesto of the Independence League and was subsequently elaborated in his speeches and writings as a leader of the youth. He wanted to inspire the youth with a new philosophy.

Bose as a Leader of the Indian Youth

Throughout his career, Bose identified himself with the aspirations of the youth and realizing that they were India's future, tried to infuse a national spirit in them. During the said period, he emerged for the first time as a youth leader. In the first phase of his political life, he had been preoccupied with issues like, national education, journalism and municipal administration and did not get the time or the opportunity to mobilize and organize the youth. After his release from prison, Bose closely aligned himself with the youth movement and addressed a number of youth conferences all over the country. Bose's emergence as a youth leader also created a significant impact in Punjab and Maharashtra and therefore, had an all India dimension. In the process, Bose evolved a full-fledged philosophy of the youth movement, which deserves critical examination.

Bose wrote an essay, *Taruner Swapna*, in 1923.[13] in which he used inspiring language to make the youth aware of their great latent potential and spur them into action. He was convinced that the youth were imbued with revolutionary potential and had a vital role to play in the struggle for freedom. What is interesting is the kind of language that he used to exhort the youth. This had implications regarding his bent of mind and also his ultimate intentions even in this early period. While Bose never directly incited the youth to adopt revolutionary violence, as a course of action, he deliberately used phraseology which created the impression that he did not envisage the role of the youth to be essentially pacifist or non-violent. He exhorted the youth saying, "It is we who create the history of freedom from country to country. We have come to generate conflicts, to spread the

message of struggle and to usher in revolution. We make our appearance with the sword in one hand wherever there is bondage. Our only business in life is to keep the road to freedom free from all obstruction so that the freedom fighters can march along that road without let or hindrance."[14] Bose wanted to fire the imagination of the youth with the image of a warrior, a perennial fighter against injustice, bondage, and evil. The spirit of revolutionary militancy became more manifest in his fervent exhortation to the youth "from time immemorial, we have been singing the music of freedom. On the one hand, we built the Tajmahal, a petrified symbol of the tear of love and on the other, we made the earth purple with rivers of blood. With our united strength, we have built society, state, literature arts and sciences in different countries. Again when we have assumed the role of destroyer and started the dance of destruction, so many societies, so many empires have been reduced to dust under our dancing feet.[15]

Bose envisaged a dual role for the youth, constructive and destructive. At the Khulna Youth Conference on June 22, 1929, he said, "Wherever there is the need for either construction or destruction, one has to depend on the youth.[16] In an essay entitled "The Call of the Motherland", written in 1925, he noted, "It is you who have created the history of freedom in country after country. Will you be asleep when in an awakening world, the message of freedom is ringing everywhere? You have ever been untouched by fear and inspired with the message of freedom, you have embraced death like heroic soldiers."[17] From this, it is clear that Bose wanted to inculcate a spirit of fearlessness among the youth that would prepare them psychologically for the struggle, which lay ahead. He also wanted to arouse them with the ideal of self-sacrifice for the cause of the motherland. Here, the inspiration of Vivekananda is quite evident. Vivekananda in his call to the youth, had said, "My children must be ready to jump into the fire if needed, to accomplish their work."[18] He had tried to inculcate a death-defying spirit in the youth saying, "Death is better than a vegetating ignorant life. It is better to die on the battlefield than to live a life of defeat."[19] While appealing to the youth, Bose, quite naturally, did not try to transmit any direct political message but concentrated instead on the creation of the requisite mentality that would galvanize the youth into dynamic revolutionary action. This became increasingly manifest in his speeches as a youth leader in the late 1920s.

Speaking at the Central Province Youth Conference at Nagpur on November 29, 1929, Bose said, "We must feel the strings of slavery and the pangs of bondage – if we are to cry out for freedom from the bottom of our heart. When this feeling becomes acute, we shall realize that, life without freedom is not worth living and as this experience grows, a time will come when our whole soul will be consumed with the longing for liberty."[20] This shows that Bose wanted to make the youth acutely conscious about their humiliating existence as a subject race and believed that if this feeling once took root, they would be gripped by an irresistible desire to smash the shackles of bondage.

From the available source material, it appears that Bose's real intention was to awaken a martial spirit in the youth and here he drew considerably from the *Gita*, which he interpreted as a gospel of militant struggle. Speaking at the Pabna Youth Conference of 1928, he said, 'When in the battle of Kurukhshetra, Sri Krishna thundered, 'Shake off all weakness and timidity'; the deathless message of the youth was manifested through him. The voice of Krishna was the voice of the immortal youth. Arjuna was overwhelmed with fear at the dreadful spectre of destruction. He momentarily forgot that there could be no creation without destruction. Thus, he had to be convinced with the help of the *Gita* that the reign of righteousness or *Dharmarajya* would be established on the great cremation ground of Kurukshetra."[21] Bose wanted to impress upon the youth, the inevitability of violence and the impracticability of non-violence as a universal guide to action. Revolution had two aspects – construction and destruction, and to Bose, youth movements, were "characterized by a feeling of restlessness and of dissatisfaction with the existing order."[22] A time was thus bound to arrive, when the overthrow of the existing order became imperative. The role of the youth at that juncture could not be strictly non-violent.

At the same time, it should be remembered that despite this indirect acceptance of violence, Bose did not marginalize the constructive aspect of revolution. He wanted to make the youth movement broad based and multifaceted as evident from his enunciation of a five fold programme for the youth, political, social, economic, physical and cultural. The aim of the movement, according to him, was to strive for self-expression and fulfilment by breaking the bondage in each of these spheres.[23] He visualized a new society emancipated from anachronistic and retrogressive customs and superstitions. Here a continuity in his thought process may be discerned,

because even while he was embroiled in the struggle for India's political emancipation, he did not lose sight of the needs of society, which had been a hallmark of his thinking in the past. He retained his emphasis on constructive nationalism even while envisaging the destruction of British imperialism. This is clear from his observation at the Cultural Province and Berar Students Conference at Amraoti December 1, 1929, that, "If freedom is to be the cardinal principle of our life, it should also be made the basis of social reconstruction. If the principle of freedom is to be applied to society, it will mean nothing short of social revolution."[24] To Bose, independence meant all round freedom.

Bose also wanted inspire the youth with a philosophy of robust optimism and activism. At the All India Youth Conference in Calcutta, on December 25, 1928, Bose criticized the Pondicherry school of thought represented by Aurobindo Ghosh, who was then known as Sri Aurobindo, which created the impression that there was nothing higher or nobler than peaceful contemplation. This, he felt, was responsible for making the people conveniently forget that the best way to conquer nature was to fight her and it was weakness to seek refuge in contemplation when one was hemmed in on all sides by dangers and difficulties.[25] Bose stated categorically, "It is this passivism, against which I protest."[26] Bose was disappointed with Aurobindo Ghosh's permanent retirement from active politics. Moreover, Ghosh's line of thinking changed significantly after 1910, as manifested in his support for the allied powers during the Second World War against the fascists, whom he viewed as a menace to human civilisation. He also became agreeable to dominion status deviating from his earlier advocacy of *Purna Swaraj*. All this signified a fundamental difference with Bose who colluded with the fascist powers for India's freedom. Bose's admiration was actually for the Aurobindo Ghosh of 1893-1910 and not the later mystical person.[27] From this it follows that, the influence of Aurobindo Ghosh, which was most marked in Bose's early life, diminished somewhat at this point. Bose did not consider Aurobindo Ghosh to be an ideal role model for the youth movement. His point was that renunciation of worldly life for personal spiritual salvation at a time when the country was engaged in a struggle against British imperialism was escapism. Bose explained his point in a letter to Dilip Kumar Roy, dated October 9, 1925 saying that, "Sri Aurobindo went even deeper than Vivekananda, but the danger of remaining withdrawn in silent contemplation, was that the active side of man might get atrophied

if he remained cut off from the tides of life and society for too long."[28] Bose's philosophy of *Karma yoga* or action as the ideal of life could not be reconciled to the life of secluded contemplation led by Aurobindo Ghosh. Dr. Satish Chandra Maikap says that, though Bose was unkind to Aurobindo, it was in the greater perspective and interest of arousing revolutionary ideas throughout the country.[29]

It may be noted here that while Bose's endeavour to inspire the youth with the dream of a free India and a society characterized by all-round freedom had an idealist-romantic strain, he was not a utopian visionary. Thus, he not only stirred the imagination of the youth with a dream, but also furnished them with a plan of action for its fulfilment. At the Nagpur Conference, he exhorted the youth to become missionaries of freedom and go from village to village and city to city to preach the gospel of freedom.[30] He also spoke of physical culture through sports, athletics and gymnastics, a new literature, a new and better type of education and a healthy conception of morality.[31] Bose's conception was thus that of a practical visionary who had a concrete plan for the realization of his vision.

While Bose's visualization of the youth movement was multidimensional, he was careful about his ordering of priorities. He was conscious of the fact that the task at hand was to secure India's political freedom. He stated categorically in his Nagpur address that, a large section of the youth had become dissatisfied with the Congress, which had not yet declared complete independence as its objective.[32] The youth movement, he said, was neither purely political, nor purely non-political while the Congress was a purely political body.[33] Thus, its scope was restricted to the political aspect only and even that aspect was not properly defined. Bose implied that the youth movement was more comprehensive and broad based than the Congress movement. The growth of the youth movement was certain to stimulate political developments[34]. The political dimension of the youth movement received a fuller formulation in Bose's concept of militarism that was manifested at the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1928.

Bose's Concept of Militarism :

Bose's concept of militarism was an integral part of his philosophy of the youth movement and the two should be studied in conjunction. Bose developed his concept of militarism with the specific purpose of providing

the youth with a militant ideal. Bose had realized after his personal experience of military training that mock-militarism had considerable symbolic value. He felt that a demonstration of militarism on the platform of the Congress would convey the message that Indians in general and Bengalis in particular, were not cowards and did not lack fighting spirit.

With this end in view, Bose organized a volunteer's army that he led in a mass parade at the Calcutta Congress of 1928. This so-called army included prominent revolutionaries, like Hemchandra Ghosh, Major Satya Gupta, Anil Chandra Roy, Jyotish Joardar, Lila Roy, Major Robi Sen, etc.; Bose himself officiated as the G.O.C. (General Officer in Command). The noted revolutionary Jatindranath Das, who later died after a prolonged hunger strike, played a significant part in providing military training to the young volunteers. From the testimony of Major Satya Gupta, it is known that "the mass parade, march past and route marches of the Bengal Volunteers Group became an object of amazement for the whole of India at large. Volunteer organizations like the Punjab Volunteers, Delhi Volunteers, Bombay People's Battalion, North West Frontier Red Shirt etc., grew up in various provinces in emulation of the Bengal Volunteers."[35] The volunteers, army created a sensational impact on the people, according to a report on the Calcutta Congress in the journal *Welfare*, 'Before the daybreak, the footpaths along the route, were lined with patient crowd, every inch of the terraces, verandahs, balconies and windows were taken up by faces. . . Certainly they were gathered to welcome a greater thing of higher importance and nobler national significance – the birth among a non-martial race, of a deep desire for martial honours. Indeed a new day was dawning for Bengal.[36] This was corroborated by the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in a report captioned "A Grand Reception", which noted that "A grand sight was presented when the Presidential procession led by Subhas Chandra Bose. . . passed through the Calcutta streets. . . A grand reception, it was one which a triumphant roman Emperor might well envy."[37]

Bose's role as General Officer in Command (GOC) came in for much ridicule from some eminent literary figures in Bengal. Kazi Nazrul Islam wrote a satirical piece projecting the unarmed volunteers army as an example of mockery.[38] Tagore too indirectly criticized Bose in a letter to Makhanlal Sarkar on December 31, 1928, where he alleged that the solemnity of the Congress had been destroyed in shameless manner.[39] The noted Bengali writer, Sajanikanta Das, also composed a sarcastic poem mocking Bose's volunteers'

army.[40] The volunteers' army, however, impressed the revolutionaries who attended the Congress. The noted revolutionary Bina Das has noted, "The Calcutta Congress was unsurpassed in its enthusiasm, discipline and seriousness. It is doubtful if a real war is fought with so much dedication. We sometimes imagined ourselves as soldiers of the future marching to meet the British in a real battle with Subhas Babu as our G.O.C."[41] Ananta Singh, the famous revolutionary of Chittagong, has mentioned in his memoirs, "I beheld to my heart's content, the image of Subhas as a fearless soldier with extraordinary personality. I imagined him as the Commander of independent India and felt intensely proud of him."[42] The late Amalendu Ghosh, a revolutionary of the Sri Sangha group, has written that, "The Calcutta Congress was the first occasion where the traditional appeal of *Khaddar* was replaced by military uniform with military insignia. It also had a separate women's army. It was thus a stage rehearsal for the Indian National Army organized by Bose 15 years later."[43] Another revolutionary of the Sri Sangha group and former-Parliamentarian, Prof. Samar Guha, is of the opinion that Bose's main intention was to incite a spirit of revolt in the British Indian Army by stirring their imagination with the image of a volunteers army committed to the national cause.[44] Since Bose has not openly expressed himself on the point, no conclusive verdict can be given on whether he probably expected army men to desert the British Indian Army and enlist as activists of the volunteers army.

In the context of the volunteers' army, the question arises whether Bose's experiment with it influenced his future political evolution. A corollary to this is the poser as to whether it is justifiable to consider Bose's role as GOC of the volunteers' army a prelude to his future emergence as commander of the Azad Hind Fauz. From available source material it appears that, Bose henceforth became a consistent advocate of using a volunteers army as a potent force in the freedom struggle.

At the Rajshahi Students Conference on August 20, 1929, he expressed the view that the uniform of the soldier was a symbol of nationalism, which helped to develop *espirit de corps.*[45] He cited historical examples like Oliver Cromwell's Ironsides, La Fayette's National Guards, Napoleon's Imperial Guards, Mussolini's Black Shirts, Russia's Red Army, and etc.[46] Bose was a firm believer in discipline and stated in his address at the Naujawan Bharat Sabha Conference at Karachi, on August 5, 1931, that discipline was one of the pillars of India's national life, and recommended the organization of

the youths into volunteer's corps under strict discipline.[47] His calculation was that evils like factionalism could be eradicated only through the enforcement of discipline. Thus, even in his Presidential speech at Haripura, he spoke of the urgent necessity of a disciplined volunteer corps under trained oficers.[48]

Bose's emphasis on the volunteers' army also signified the rejection of nonviolence as the only creed. While it is true that the volunteers' army was unarmed, its spirit was not that of non-violence. Leonard Gordon in his study of Bose, rightly remarks that, "It may not be improper to see Bose's recruitment of a small unarmed but disciplined corps, as a mark of the new awareness of the nationalists that real military training modelled on this small step, but involving weapons, might at some future time be the order of the day."[49] Amalendu Ghosh corroborates this view saying that the volunteers' army was intended to convey the message that the Indians were no longer prepared to accept violence from the British without resistance.[50] It may be inferred that the ruthless *lathi* charges by the police on non-violent demonstrators during the non-cooperation movement made Bose realize that patient endurance of brutal repression would not produce any impression on British imperialism. A much greater impact would perhaps be achieved through a symbolic display of militarism. Mamata Mehta of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment has said that Bose's experiences of police atrocities on the people as far back as the non-cooperation movement convinced him that without military training, the nation would not be able to stand on its feet. [51] Bose was the only Congress leader who laid emphasis on military training and martial spirit, because the idea of a military showdown with the British government though not apparent probably was at the back of his mind even though he adhered to the Congress policy of non-violence at the time.

It should also be pointed out that many eyewitnesses to Bose's military outfit at the Calcutta Congress visualized his future role as Commander of an Indian National Army. Swami Pranabananda of Bharat Sevasrama Sangha is reported to have forecast that Bose would organize an army clad in exactly the same uniform, in the future.[52] Though this prophecy came true, it is doubtful whether Bose at that point of time, thought in terms of a national army. Moreover, there is a strong body of opinion, which is against the tendency to magnify Bose's military image. For instance Sugata Bose, grandson of Sarat Chandra Bose, contends that, Bose was not military person and for quite some time after the Calcutta Congress, he was not seen clad

in military uniform. He referred to himself as a public servant dedicated to the service of the nation.[53]

While this is certainly true, it can still be argued that Bose's interest in the military did not diminish. When he toured Chittagong and Midnapore shortly after the Calcutta Congress, he was accorded a military reception. Moreover, there were some similarities between the volunteers' army and the Azad Hind Fauz. Both were organized on the basis of strict discipline. Secondly, at the Calcutta Congress, Bose organized a women's army for the first time under the command of Latika Bose, niece of Aurobindo Ghosh. It had its counterpart in the Rani of Jhansi Regiment under Captain Laxmi Sehgal who had also attended the Calcutta Congress. Bose was the first Indian leader who wanted to assign a militant role to women in the freedom struggle. Gandhi had earlier appealed to the women of the country to join the anti-imperialist struggle and the Gandhian movements were characterized by large-scale participation of women. However, Gandhi did not, like Bose, think in terms of a women's army Uma Devi, the Sri Sangha activist has testified that Bose had a broader and more direct conception of the role of women in the freedom struggle than Gandhi.[54]

Scholars like Dr. Chittabrata Palit have expressed themselves against the exaggeration of Bose's warrior image, which tends to overshadow other important facets of his life. Dr. Chittabrata Palit is of the view that, if Bose's warrior image is to be retained, it should be something akin to millennial figures like the five horsemen of the apocalypse, that is to say, a fighter against injustice, and a crusader for democracy and equality. By portraying him as a perennial soldier, one creates the impression that Bose was a ruthless dictator, which is far remote from the truth.[55] In this connection it may be noted that while Bose's military image should not be unduly magnified, the available source material indicates that he was never wedded to the principle of nonviolence and in his heart of hearts, contemplated a military assault on British Imperialism According to the testimony of Major Satya Gupta, Bose is reported to have remarked privately that, he wanted to give a real thrashing to the British in the future which they would never forget.[56] Moreover, the Calcutta Congress cemented his rapport with the revolutionaries who were believers in violence. To trace the continuity in his political evolution, it is necessary to examine his relationship with revolutionaries.

Bose and the Revolutionaries

Bose had connections with revolutionaries ever since his student life. He had sporadic contacts with them in the first two phases of his political career but in the third phase these contacts became frequent and widespread though he did not believe that the country could be liberated through secret terrorist activities. According to Dr. Chittabrata Palit, Bose was never in favour of secret terrorism. However, critics like Girish Chandra Maiti have contested this point on the ground that Bose was constantly in touch with revolutionaries and was suspected by the government.[57] It appears that Bose expressed tacit support for the methods and tactics employed by revolutionaries. Moreover, his visualization of the final stage of the struggle against British imperialism was clearly in terms of a military assault as evident from the view expressed in his book *The Indian Struggle* written during 1934-5 in Europe. In this he stated that passive resistance could paralyse a foreign administration but was incapable of overthrowing it. Thus, it had to be transformed into active resistance that at the final stage would culminate in armed revolution that would lead to the end of the British Empire in India.[58] Bose had considerable sympathy for the revolutionaries who rejected non-violence as the ultimate method of struggle. At the same time, he recognized the revolutionaries as an integral part of the nationwide militant movement, which he visualized as the final stage of struggle. He felt that they could play a useful subsidiary role creating a martial spirit and infusing courage, determination and a fighting spirit in the people, qualities, which were necessary to combat British imperialism. According to Bimal Dasgupta, the late revolutionary of the Bengal Volunteers group who assassinated James Peddie, District Magistrate of Midnapore on April 7, 1930, the main aim of the revolutionaries was to dispel all traces of fear from the minds of the people and create in them a conviction that even with their limited resources, it was possible to match the might of British imperialism.[59] Bose, however, did not believe that sporadic terrorism would liberate India, as evident from his remark at the Howrah District Political Conference on September 28. 1928 that "A bomb or a pistol here and there may succeed in creating terrorism but can never bring about a revolution which is an entirely different thing. . . it is my firm conviction that the age of terrorism has passed for ever.[60]

Bose never condemned publicly any act of revolutionary violence. Since he was an adherent of the official Congress policy of non-violence, it was

not possible for him to come out in open support of violent acts though he did express tacit support for revolutionaries. From secondary sources, it is also known that he privately sympathised with them. So far as the revolutionaries were concerned, there was much support and sympathy for Bose, especially from the revolutionaries of Chittagong and Midnapore, who were confirmed believers in violence. They not only supported Bose's actions and policies but also approved of his eventual decision to leave the country to organize an armed struggle from outside India. Some of the essential aspects of Bose's affinity to the revolutionaries may be analysed in this context.

The Calcutta Congress of 1928 brought Bose close to the revolutionaries of Chittagong and their leader Surya Sen. Bose initially signed the Motilal Nehru Committee report declaring dominion status as the goal of the Congress, but later on moved an amendment to it urging the Congress to declare its goal to be complete independence. The Motilal Nehru Committee report was in the context of a challenge by Lord Birken head, secretary of state for India that, Indians were not capable of unitedly drafting a constitution for India. The All Parties Conference ratified the report at Lucknow.[61] Bose's changed stance was largely due to the pressure of revolutionaries who impressed on Bose, the urgency of proposing complete independence as the goal of the Congress even at the risk of incurring the displeasure of Gandhi.[62] Bose held private conversations with Surya Sen during the Calcutta Congress.[63] Surya Sen also tried to secure the maximum number of votes in support of Bose's amendment.[64] It is noteworthy that, while the amendment was defeated by 1350 votes to 973, the margin was not very large and Gandhi clearly failed to achieve a landslide majority. Bose was able to secure such a large chunk of the votes because of the backing he received from the revolutionaries. Many revolutionaries of Bengal, who were dead against dominion status, attended the Calcutta Congress. They wanted to champion the idea of complete independence at the Calcutta Congress and canvassed support from the delegates of different provinces. According to Arun Chandra Guha, a prominent member of the Jugantar group, the Jugantar revolutionaries conferred privately with Bose who after initial hesitation was persuaded by Satin Sen to accede to the demand of the revolutionaries. Sen apparently pressurized him with the veiled threat that he might lose the support of the revolutionaries of the Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee (BPCC) if he did not side with them.[65] This version of

the informal conference has been corroborated by the *Amrita Bazar Pairika* and the *Forward*.[66]

Bose's emphasis on militarism attracted the Chittagong revolutionaries. Ananta Lal Singh, a noted revolutionary of Chittagong has referred to a secret government report which was produced during the trial of the Chittagong revolutionaries, which said that the Chittagong visitors who attended the Calcutta Congress returned home after witnessing the display of pseudo-militarism, filled with a spirit of emulation which was soon to be translated into practice.[67] From the testimony of Ananta Lal Singh, it is further known that immediately after the Calcutta Congress, Bose was invited to the Chittagong District Conference. He was accorded a military ovation by the volunteers' army of Chittagong, which was organized along the model of the Bengal Volunteers. On May 12, 1929, Bose conferred with the revolutionaries in a secret meeting at Mahalakshmi Bank that lasted for nearly two hours. In this meeting, he was apprised of the plans and programmes of the Chittagong group and Bose in turn, expressed his avid interest in the volunteers' army of Chittagong.[68] Ardhendu Shekhar Guha also testifies that prominent revolutionaries like Lokenath Bal, Ananta Singh and Ganesh Ghosh accorded a military ovation to Bose at Chittagong. Bose too became keenly interested in their activities and also their leader Surya Sen and even tried to induce Sen to flee the country like Rashbihari Bose and conduct an armed struggle from outside. Bose visited Chittagong again as Congress President in 1939 and received a great ovation. Guha testifies further that most of the Chittagong revolutionaries supported Bose during his conflict with Gandhi after the Tripuri Congress of 1939 and Surya Sen would have done so had be been alive.

He confirms that, Sen had great respect for Bose and partially confided to his, his plans of an organized armed uprising in Chittagong to assess Bose's opinion, and also arranged for the private appointment between him and the Chittagong revolutionaries. From then onwards, Bose maintained constant touch with the revolutionaries of Chittagong.[69] It is, however, not sure whether he was informed in advance about the Chittagong armoury raid that followed. The late revolutionary Sailen Neogi is of the view that Bose was not consulted before the event.[70] Guha's testimony, however, proves that Bose was not entirely unaware of the way things were about to shape and this has been corroborated by Ananta Lal Singh.

According to Ananta Lal Singh, the Chittagong revolutionaries made

it clear to Bose that they accepted nonviolence only as a temporary expedient and envisaged preparations for an armed revolution. They had no intention of enhancing the glamour of Congress sessions by enlisting as unarmed volunteers in a nonviolent volunteers army.[71] This shows that while the volunteers' army of Bose made an impact on the Chittagong revolutionaries, they wanted to go beyond it by organizing a massive military insurrection that signified genuine rather than mock militarism. Bose reportedly expressed moral support for their military programme.[72] It also appears that Bose was very impressed by the idea of the Chittagong revolutionaries that even if in a solitary district, the military base of British imperialism could be captured, it would produce a stimulating effect on the revolutionary youth. This fell in line with Bose's idea of a parallel government which he expressed at the Subjects Committee meeting of December 31, 1929.[73]

Bose's idea of a parallel government was actually drawn from the Sinn Fein movement of Ireland. Many of his speeches and writings contained references to the Irish movement and also Irish leaders.[74] From available source material, it is known that the Chittagong revolutionaries were also profoundly influenced by the Sinn Fein movement and the Chittagong armoury raid that took place on April 18, 1930, coincided with the date of Easter Monday on which the Easter rebellion occurred in Ireland on April 24, 1916. The Irish leader, Dan Bren was the role model of Surya Sen and his comrades Dan Bren's book *My Fight for Irish Freedom* was a great favourite of Surya Sen and many others of his group. He named his group Indian Republican Army-Chittagong Branch, in emulation of the Irish Republican Army. Dan Bren's photograph was also displayed at the Calcutta Congress.[75]

Bose is reported to have expressed jubilation in prison when he heard the news of the Chittagong armoury raid as testified by Sudhangshu Dasgupta, an under trial prisoner at Alipore Central Jail. This view has been supported by Ardhendu Shekhar Guha who testifies that Bose reportedly told Ganesh Ghosh and Ananta Singh that he was sure that armed struggle alone would succeed.[76] He tacitly defended the act in his book *The Indian Struggle* saying that, it signified a reprisal against the government's policy of savage repression, which he described as official terrorism.[77]

A close affinity between Bose and the Chittagong revolutionaries also apparently developed following the decision of the latter to support him against J.M. Sengupta in the provincial Congress elections.[78] He retained a soft corner for them even after his departure from India. Captain Sushil

Khastagir testifies that Bose promoted him to the rank of Captain in the Azad Hind Fauz immediately after learning that he came from the district of Surya Sen. Even his family appears to have sympathised with them. Bose's brother Sarat Chandra Bose provided shelter to Indumati Singh, sister of Ananta Singh, who was then in exile, in his own house. Bose was in prison at that time but knew everything about it and approved of his brother's action. Ananta Singh testifies that Sarat Chandra Bose provided funds to the Chittagong revolutionaries and provided them with hand bombs so that they could flee from jail. Anil Chandra Nag, revolutionary of the Sri Sangha group testifies that Bose tacitly supported all this.[79]

Apart from Chittagong, Bose was very close to the revolutionaries of Midnapore, Hemchandra Ghosh, the leader of the Bengal Volunteers group, was very close to Bose. In the early thirties, a tremendous sensation was created in Midnapore through a sequence of direct actions resulting in the murder of three successive District Magistrates, James Peddie on April 7, 1931, Robert Douglas on April 30, 1932 and Burge in September 1933. It is not certain whether Bose had any secret communication with the activists of Midnapore and had any idea about their plans as in the case of Chittagong. In one respect, his affinity to Midnapore is comparable to his intimacy with Chittagong, i.e., he was accorded a military reception by the youth of Midnapore parading in military uniform when he visited Midnapore on December 21, 1929. Bimal Dasgupta, who murdered James Peddie, was in charge of the volunteers army along with another revolutionary, Dinesh Gupta. Bose's military outfit at the Calcutta Congress had inspired the youth of Midnapore with a spirit of militarism just as it had inspired the freedom fighters of Chittagong.[80]

From the testimony of Prabhangsu Pal, who murdered Robert Douglas it is known that Bose's speeches inspired the youth to take up arms against the British as he always emphasized that a subject race could win freedom but this could not be done through begging. Moreover, Bose created the impression that he sympathised with the revolutionaries as he, like them, was never reconciled to the reality of India's subjection to British rule.[81] The substance of Bose's speech at the Midnapore Youth Conference corroborates Pal's views, because the central theme was India's subjection to British rule, which laid at the root of her other maladies.[82] Bose's speech had an inspiring effect on the youth of Midnapore. Bimal Dasgupta testifies that Bose reminded the youth of Midnapore that if they wanted to win freedom for

their country, they would have to pay the price for it. From the tone and style of his speech, it was clear that though Bose officially adhered to *Satyagraha*, his actual thinking was different.[83]

Bose took a keen interest in the revolutionaries of Midnapore and was largely instrumental in stalling the execution of Bimal Dasgupta who was caught by the police on October 29, 1931, while making an attempt on the life of Mr. G. Villiars, President of the European Association.[84] Even after Bose became Congress President, he maintained contacts with the Midnapore revolutionaries. Bimal Dasgupta testifies that once when he and other convicts undertook a fast in jail demanding immediate release, Bose visited them personally and promised to support them. Later, he again visited them and urged them to temporarily withdraw their fast on tactical grounds because he was planning to start a struggle against the federal scheme.[85] Bose tried to convince the prisoners that the government was planning to arrest him and his imprisonment would forestall the struggle against the federal scheme. If however, as a tactical move, Bose could induce the revolutionaries to end their fast, the government would not arrest him immediately. In that case, he would be able to start the struggle. If the prisoners were not released, he advised them to resume the anti-government struggle through their fast and it would then be treated as a part of the national struggle. All the prisoners were convinced by his logic.[86]

On yet another occasion, Bose's sympathy for the revolutionaries became apparent and that was the police firing at the prison camp at Hijli on September 16, 1931, which resulted in the death of two Bengali youths. From the testimony of Manohar Mukherjee, veteran revolutionary of the Jugantar Group, it is known that prisoners of Hijli did not initially agree to hand over the dead bodies to anyone other than Bose in whom they had undying faith.[87] He organized a protest meeting on September 26, 1931 near the Calcutta Monument where Tagore despite his disapproval of terrorism, addressed a large audience.[88] Bose issued a statement on October 23, 1931, in which he said "the tragedies of Chittagong and Hijli have cast lengthening shadows all over the country. The lesson of servitude and humiliation have been burnt deep into our soul."[89] Robert Douglas, who became District Magistrate of Midnapore, held the prisoners and not the police, responsible for the Hijli firing and this provoked the attempt on his life by Prabhangshu Pal and Prodyot Bhattacharya, which proved successful. Prabhangsu Pal escaped but Prodyot Bhattacharya, who was caught and eventually hanged,

was found carrying a note to the effect that it was a protest against the Hijli firing.[90] Bose may not have morally supported the killings and there is no evidence to this effect, but he certainly understood the motives.

Bose's tacit sympathy for revolutionaries becomes clear from his reaction to the siege of the Writers Building in Calcutta on December 8, 1930, by Benoy Bose, Badal Gupta and Dinesh Gupta, which culminated in the murder of Colonel Simpson, Inspector of Prisons. Benoy Bose, who led the action squad and had earlier killed F. J. Lowman, Inspector General of Police at Dhaka on August 29, 1930, subsequently went into hiding in Calcutta. Bose took an active interest in him and suggested that he should go abroad to save himself from the police Dr. Subodh Chandra Sengputa corroborates this view saying that Sarat Chandra Bose even offered to pay the passage money to enable Benoy Bose to escape.[91] Benoy Bose, however, refused to flee. There are two contradictory opinions about Bose's involvement in the Writers Building action. According to the first, he directly encouraged the action. Biswajit Dutta, a veteran revolutionary, has testified that when informed about the tight security arrangement which rendered difficult the task of killing colonel Simpson outside Writers Building, Bose reportedly said, "But one can certainly get hold of him inside writers Building."[92] The second view rules out Bose's direct connection with the affair. The late revolutionary Samarendra Basu Thakur expressed this view.[93]

From the available source material, it appears that Bose tacitly supported the act even if he was not personally involved in it. In a statement as Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation, he deplored the "tragic incident" at Writers Building, but added, "It will not do to simply brand as misguided, the youths who are responsible for these incidents. The fact stares us in the face that, India today wants freedom and very soon there are people in the country, whatever their number may be, who want freedom not merely by following the Congress programme but if need be, they want freedom at any price and by any means."[94] He also warned that unless the promulgation of draconian ordinances by the government was stopped, an underground movement would start[95]. Bose, thus, did not utter any strong word of condemnation for the besiegers of Writers Building but held the government responsible for the frequency of acts of violence. It should also be noted that the view of Dr. Jasobanta Kar that Bose sympathised with only one of the trio involved in the Writers Building incident that is Benoy Bose[96], is not correct. Bose, who was at Arambagh on the day Dinesh Gupta was hanged, asked the local

Congress leader Radhakrishna Pal to read to him the prison letters of Gupta published in the journal *Benu*. He was intensely moved by the contents of the letters and described them as "not letters but a valuable philosophy of life."[97] This clearly proves that he was very much sympathetic towards Gupta.

Bose also led the funeral procession of Jatin Das, the revolutionary of the Bengal Volunteers Group, who died after a prolonged fast unto death at Lahore jail on September 13, 1929. In his speech at the Lahore session of the Punjabi Students Conference on October 19, 1929, he said referring to Jatin Das, "He is an ideal, an emblem of what is purest and noblest in humanity. Let us therefore resolve to be free or at least die in the pursuit of freedom and let us show by our conduct and character that we are worthy of being the countrymen of the great martyr Jatindra Nath Das."[98]

Finally, Bose was full of admiration for Bhagat Singh, the revolutionary of Punjab, who was tried in the Lahore Conspiracy case of 1929 and sentenced to death along with two of his colleagues. Bose tried his best to induce Gandhi to obtain the remittal of the death sentences but failed.[99] At the All India Naujawan Bharat Sabha Conference in Karachi on April 5, 1931, Bose paid an eloquent tribute to Bhagat Singh saying, Bhagat Singh is dead. Long live Bhagat Singh. . . Bhagat Singh is not a person. He symbolizes the spirit of revolt, which has taken possession of the country from one end to the other. The spirit is unconquerable, the flame that spirit has lit up, will not die."[100] It should be noted, however, that although Bose had close links with the Bengal revolutionaries, his connection with other revolutionaries is not known, the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA), which had been formed under the leadership of Bhagat Singh, also included Bengali revolutionaries, Ajay Ghosh and Jatindranath Sanyal were from U.P. and Phanindranath Ghosh was from Bihar. The HSRA, it must be mentioned did not have a religious character, but leaned toward Marxian socialism.

From the above analysis, it is clear that Bose had a deep emotional rapport with revolutionaries especially those in Bengal. He privately said to Dilip Kumar Roy, "The revolutionary movement in Bengal was the first real movement in the sense that it gave our supine prostrate people, the first hint about the reality of their own unaided strength.[101] He also said to Pabitra Mohan Roy of the Azad Hind Secret Service department, "I could not forsake the revolutionaries of Bengal because they alone salvaged to some extent, the lost honour of the Bengalis and redeemed her shame. They alone among

all others, have the determination to do or die."[102] Finally, Bose told Amiya Chakravarti that, "Many call me a terrorist, but I have killed no one nor incited others to kill, but at the same time I have never lamented the killing of some wicked enemy of the country."[103] It is clear from this that Bose had a soft corner for the revolutionaries because he, like them, felt that *ahimsa* would demoralize the people in the face of savage repression.

Apart from the revolutionary movement, Bose also devoted attention to other urgent and pressing issues, one major issue being the communal situation. His diagnosis of the communal problem deserves attention here.

Bose and the Communal Problem

Throughout his political career, Bose addressed himself to the Hindu-Muslim question. He envisaged the solution of the problem at the cultural and socio-economic levels. Speaking at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference at Poona on May 3, 1928, he said that, cultural intimacy would gave the way for communal harmony because cultural rapprochement rather than exclusivism provided the fundamental basis of unity.[104] The foundation of Bose's cultural autonomy model, which he presented at the Haripura Congress of 1938, which emphasized cultural autonomy to different minority groups, was thus laid as far back as 1928. Bose was categorical on the point that, "Fanaticism is the greatest thorn in the path of cultural intimacy and there is no better remedy for fanaticism than secular and scientific education."[105] Bose's logic was that with the spread of mass education, economic consciousness would grow and communal feuds would go once and for all. He was also a consistent opponent of the system of separate electorates that he considered incompatible with nationalism.[106] Bose did not deviate in the future from his uncompromising stand on the need for a joint electorate. He expressed the view that both Hindus and Muslims made their own contribution to the enrichment of Indian civilization. They did not have separate identities and the Indian civilization was a product of their composite heritage.[107] Here, a continuity in Bose's thought may be traced as he sought to create communal unity in the Azad Hind Fauz by emphasizing composite heritage and cultural synthesis in place of separatism and cultural conflict. This is evident from one of his speeches published by the Department of Enlightenment and Culture of the Indian Independence League in East Asia.[108]

Bose also wanted to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and good will among Hindus and Muslims. He felt that this could be done though mutual compromises. During his speech at Albert Hall, Calcutta, on October 29, 1927, Bose said that if cow-slaughter by Muslims was prohibited, it would deter the Hindus from playing musical instruments in front of mosques.[109] Though this was a sensitive issue, he maintained an unbiased attitude in this respect. During his speech at Sraddhananda Park, Calcutta, on November 12, 1927, he strongly criticized Hindus for playing musical instruments in front of mosques and condemned the police firing on unarmed Muslims of Kulkathi.[110]

Furthermore, Bose clearly expressed himself against the propagation of Hinduism as the ideal for a Hindu India.[111] He was completely against any political slogan of *Hindutva*. Bose never thought in terms of a theocratic state and was also against all kinds of dogma and zealotry. He categorically stated that he would not submit before the paid agents of any communal organization.[112]

Finally, Bose was aware that the basic socio-economic problems of unemployment, poverty and illiteracy affected both communities. Self-rule was the only solution and its attainment was possible only if the two communities sorted out their differences through mutual discussions.[113] Bose was of the opinion that the issue of *Swaraj* would serve to unite Hindus and Muslims on a common platform. Thus, in a speech at Coronation Park, Dhaka, on January 15, 1928, he exhorted the two communities to join hands because any communal enmity at a time when the country faced a crisis, could cause great national harm.[114] However, Dr. Nemai Sadhan Bose, former Vice-Chancellor of Vishwa Bharati University, has shown that though Bose was sincere and earnest in his attempt to extirpate the canker of communalism, it was beyond his capacity to regulate the flow of events particularly because at that time, communal organizations had begun to gain ascendancy.[115] Bose's approach to the communal problem was idealistic-nationalistic which could not transcend the limitations of the circumstances. Thus, he was not as successful in creating communal unity in India as he was in the final phase of his career, that is to say during the INA phase when he was not encumbered by constraints.[116] Apart from the communal problem, Bose also devoted serious thought to the techniques and strategies of struggle.

Techniques and Strategies of Struggle :

While Bose was already perhaps envisaging an armed struggle with the British in the future, he adhered to the programme of non-violence on this period. These included the boycott of British goods, development of the women's movement, mobilization of workers and peasants and skilful use of propaganda as a weapon of struggle. This is significant in the context of the various movements both mainstream as well as parallel, which were organised in the late twenties and the early thirties.

So far as the boycott movement, was concerned Bose appeared to be impressed by international examples, like the economic blockade of Germany that forced her to negotiate with France after the First World War.[117] Bose has also referred to Russia's burnt earth policy against Napoleon that led to the virtual starvation of his army and was the decisive factor in his ultimate downfall.[118] His logic was that a successful boycott movement could trigger off a civil revolution in England, demoralize the bureaucracy and convince the average Britisher that political starvation of India meant economic starvation for Great Britain. This would force England to come to the negotiating table. In an appeal to his countrymen on March 16, 1929, Bose recommended measures to popularize the boycott movement though the distribution of leaflets, the organization of boycott meetings, the establishment of volunteer organizations and *Swadeshi* museums, training of persons for propagating the message of boycott and the creation of a *Swadeshi* directory for obtaining the latest information about indigenous goods.[119]

Bose also realized the crucial significance of the recruitment of women in the freedom struggle. He emphasized on the equal rights of men and women, the removal of social barriers that inhibited the freedom of Indian women and advocated that women should be enlisted in the freedom struggle. To promote the interest of women in society, he expressed himself against child marriage and in favour of the extension of female education, widow remarriage, and etc.[120] Here, Bose displayed a thoroughly modern outlook and a determination to uproot retrogressive social customs and conventions. A current activist of the women's movement, Aparajita Goppi suggests that, Bose was influenced here by Vidyasagar.[121] Although Bose has nowhere referred to Vidyasagar, the latter's influence on his life can be easily established.[122] Moreover, Bose visited the Vidyasagar Bani Bhavan, an asylum for widows run by the Nari Siksha Samiti on October 22, 1930, and

expressed the hope that it would be conducive to an all round improvement of the status of women.[123] This clearly reflects Bose's respect for Vidyasagar's efforts at upgrading the status of women.

Bose also tried to demolish the myth of inferiority of women to men. Though he was certain that without social reform, the emancipation of women would remain an elusive ideal, he was equally convinced that without political freedom, social reform would be meaningless. Thus, he inspired women with a militant ideal and encouraged them to specialize in physical training and dagger play. According to Dr. Sobhanlal Mukherjee, Bose's stand on the emancipation of women was greatly inspired by the Bengali novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterji Bose reportedly delivered a speech at Asutosh Memorial Hall, Bhowanipore, on the day Chatterji expired in 1938 where he described him as a pathfinder for the women's movement in India.[124] Bose obviously anticipated the role of women in the final struggle for freedom which he sought to realize through his Rani of Jhansi Regiment in the INA Bose wrote in the autograph book of Shanti Das who murdered Mr. Stephens, the District Magistrate of Comilla, on December 14, 1931, the following lines of a common poem "Oh Mother: Draw your dagger to defend your honour". Here a continuity in Bose's thought may be noted. He was a consistent believer in creating martial spirit among women and wrote in an unpublished letter to Anita Guha on September 3, 1938 that women needed to be trained in dagger and *lathi* play.[125] In this respect, Bose differed from his predecessors like Vivekananda and Vidyasagar who championed the cause of women's emancipation. While they tried to promote the education of women and to ameliorate their social disabilities, they did not think in terms of assigning to them, the role of freedom fighters, perhaps because the era of mass struggle had not yet arrived. But Bose wanted women to play the role of valiant soldiers of freedom and in this respect he went beyond his predecessors and contemporaries.

Bose also laid emphasis on an elaborate propaganda network for the dissemination and propagation of the ideals of the freedom struggle. This was a logical continuation of his emphasis on propaganda as an instrument of Congress policy expressed in his letter to C.R. Das from Cambridge. In his speech at the All India Naujawan Bharat Sabha at Karachi on April 5, 1931, he emphasized on countrywide propaganda.[126] At this point of time, however, he was not yet thinking in terms of foreign propaganda but rather the indoctrination of the people of India with the ideals of the freedom struggle. He extended this to include foreign propaganda.

Bose was also categorical on the need to mobilize the labour and the peasantry for the cause of the freedom struggle.[127] However, he did not prefer a class based approach to the problem as evident from his observation that "It would be disastrous in the highest degree if we launch a class war while we are all bed fellows of slavery, in order that we afford an amusement to the common anemy."[128] Bose took an active interest in labour problems and associated himself with the Tata Steel Company strike at Jamshedpur in 1928. Dr. Nirban Basu has tried to show that Bose was less successful in Jamshedpur as a labour leader than Abdul Bari. Bose viewed the labour movement as a part of the anti-imperialist struggle and hence did not evince much interest in the struggle of labour waged in its own interest.[129] While the second point is substantially correct, the first does not reflect the entire truth because even if Bose was less successful than Bari at Jamshedpur, the authorities of the Tata Steel Company, like Jahangir Gandhi, had great respect for Bose.[130] However, it is not sure whether it was a personal admiration for Bose as a nationalist or an appreciation of his role in the labour movement.

As regards the second point, Bose recognized the labour movement not as an autonomous force but only as a weapon of struggle against British imperialism. Professor Manju Chattopadhyay refers to Bose's attempt to break up a labour strike in the Calcutta Corporation in 1940, headed by Begum Sakina. Swami Sahajananda ultimately dissuaded Bose from crushing the strike, but Bose's overall attitude reflected a serious inconsistency as he had all along supported the demands of the labourers.[131] Prof. Gautam Chattopadhyay explains this, saying that, Bose was not hesitant to even attack a labour movement if it militated against the anti-imperialist struggle. He decided to crush the labourer's strike because it was directed against the Corporation, which Bose wanted to use as a front against British imperialism.[132]

In view of the aforesaid evaluations of Bose's attitude to the labour movement, it may be concluded that even when he adopted anti-labour policy, he did not compromise on his fundamental anti-imperialist position. In this sense, there was no inconsistency in him. During this period, Bose came into conflict with the communists and a split occurred in the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC). It was a case of left sectarianness *versus* left nationalism. The liberals and conventional trade unionists left the AITUC in November 1929, and formed the Indian Trade Union Federation. The

second split occurred when the communists themselves had to secede in July 1931, to form the Red Trade Union Congress.

Bose's association with the labour movement had a significant impact on his ideological evolution. He displayed a pronounced antipathy towards communism as evident from his observation on July 11, 1931 that the right wing of the labour movement stood for reform, while the communists were adherents of Moscow. He claimed to belong to the third group, which stood for an Indian brand of socialism suited to her own methods.[133] He described the Moscow oriented communists as a serious menace to the growth of healthy trade unions in India.[134] This was consistent with Bose's line of thinking because he was a socialist all along but never a communist.[135] At this point of time, Bose believed that the communists were anti-national and their emphasis on internationalism could be detrimental because it was necessary to harness the labour and peasantry to the cause of nationalism. Prof. Gautam Chattopadhyay, the noted communist scholar is of the opinion that Bose wanted socialism but had no class approach. He might have had admiration for Marx and Lenin, but philosophically he could not be a Marxist or a Leninst.[136] What Bose wanted was that the labour movement should also have nationalism as a goal. He has thus been characterized as a left nationalist along with Jawaharlal Nehru.

Bose's emphasis on nationalism did not signify a rejection of internationalism. In a speech at Sraddhananda Park, Calcutta, on September 22, 1928, Bose said, "I am a believer in internationalism but not of the type which seeks to integrate all races of the world into one single whole. I do not want to see the world dominated by a solitary idea of mode of thought devoid of any variety.[137] He thus, had his own views on internationalism, but nationalism to him, was more important. It was his apprehension that excessive emphasis on internationalism would result in the marginalization of the immediate objective of political freedom.

During the Calcutta Congress, Bose, who was the GOC" of the volunteers, blocked a worker's procession led by communists like Muzaffar Ahmed, Sibnath Banerjee, etc., who wanted to hold a meeting under the auspices of the Congress. The timely intervention of Motilal Nehru, who allowed the demonstrators to enter, prevented unseemly incidents. It is said that, Bose even wanted to call in the police but when he came to know that the demonstrators had come to voice their demand for complete independence, he said that had he known this in advance, he would not have obstructed

them.[138] This shows that he was not against the working class especially when its aspiration was nationalism but was against the communist theory of class war. As Prof. Gautam Chattopadhyay says, he initially suspected that a communist led working class movement could develop into a parallel force rivaling the radical stream of the Congress, which clearly revealed a duality in Bose's attitude.[139] Actually, Bose never wavered in his stand on complete independence and his subsequent support for the worker's demonstration showed that he was willing to accommodate anyone irrespective of ideological differences if they fell in line with his campaign for *Purna Swaraj*. His role as president of the AITUC in giving his vote twice and then securing a majority for his side by using his casting vote, has been criticized by Dr. Nirban Basu on the ground that Bose made no attempt to make the AITUC stronger and united by bringing either the communists or constitutionalists, back to its fold.[140] However, Bose's attitude clearly emanated from his conviction about the anti-national role of the communists at that time which he could not reconcile with his anti-imperialist posture.

Bose also evinced keen interest in the peasantry and was associated with peasant organizations like the Labour Swaraj Party, Bangiya Krishak Samiti, Workers and Peasants Party, All India Kisan Sabha and the Kirti Kisan party. He did not directly participate in any peasant movement as such but supported their demands. In the Manifesto of the Independence for India League published by Bose on October 2, 1928, he championed the cause of exemption of peasants from the crippling burden of debt through state intervention and abolition of the *zamindari* system.[141] He reiterated this stand in his Presidential address at Haripura. There was, however, a solitary instance of self-contradiction in Bose when he supported the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Bill of 1928, which was pro-landlord and anti-tenant in the Bengal Legislative Council. The only Swarajist dissident was Jitendralal Banerji.[142] Since Bose has not expressed himself on the point, the reasons for his stand cannot be ascertained. He possibly did not consider it unwise to defy the party whip. Prof. Gautam Chattopadhyay is of the view that this single instance does not reflect the overall picture of Bose because he later became very vocal against landlordism.[143]

In view of Bose's enunciation of the techniques and strategies of struggle, his overall ideological outlook needs to be examined.

Ideological Evolution of Bose

The general pattern of Bose's ideological evolution between 1928-32 indicates that, he developed a firm conviction that socialism was the answer to India's needs and problems. In the first phase of his political life, he had not championed the cause of socialism, though he had expressed socialistic sentiments. In the second phase, he became a vocal exponent of a kind of socialism, which he felt suited India's needs, as distinguished from Marxian socialism. Elaborating his idea at the Conference of the All India Naujawan Bharat Sabha, he said, "I want a Socialist republic in India."[144] He, however, made it clear that he did not believe that abstract principles could be applied in the same manner, form and degree, to different nations or countries.[145] Thus, he felt that, "Marxian principles when applied to Russia and Russian conditions gave rise to Bolshevism. Similarly, Socialism when applied to India and Indian conditions will develop a new form or type of Socialism which we may hail as Indian Socialism."[146] The roots of his idea of *samyavada*, which subsequently elaborated in his book *The Indian Struggle*, may, thus, be traced to the gradual evolution of his political views in the early thirties. Bose laid particular emphasis on the need to avoid blind imitation of any foreign system like Bolshevism, which, he felt, was going through an experimental stage and had departed considerably from the original theory of Marx and Lenin. The peculiar circumstances and conditions prevailing in Russia had necessitated a substantial modification of the Marxist-Leninist theory.[147] He also made it clear that despite its universal appeal, communism would not suit Indian conditions.[148] This was anticipatory of Bose's subsequent specific criticisms of communism in *The Indian Struggle* and his enunciation of the reasons why it would not succeed in India. Bose observed at the All Bengal Youth Conference at the Calcutta University Institute Hall, in December 1927, that, had Marx been alive, it was doubtful whether he would have been happy with Russia's present condition.[149] While Bose was against the blind imitation of the Bolshevik model, he paradoxically wanted India to take a leaf out of the Bolshevik revolution because Bolshevism had neither ignored past history nor the requirements of the present,[150] and had, therefore, not rigidly adhered to orthodox Marxism. Here, Bose conveyed the important message that the artificial implantation of any alien system on Indian soil, which was not attuned to the tradition, and genius of the people of India, was bound to be counter-productive. Pradip Bose, Bose's nephew,

is of the opinion that unlike western democratic institutions, India's parliamentary democracy was not the result of a long process of organic growth. India tended to import ideas and techniques and herein lay the greatest intellectual challenge of preserving what was valuable in the Indian tradition and at the same time taking the fullest advantage of the new discoveries in science and technology. Bose's idea of such a synthesis provided the surest foundation for a progressive and forward-looking Indian State.[151]

Significantly, Bose's idea of a synthesis of communism and fascism which was expressed in his book, *The Indian Struggle*, also originated in this period. Dr. Amales Tripathi's opinion is that if Bose had been influenced by Nazism and fascism, it was between 1933 and 1938 and not earlier,[152] is not correct. In his Mayoral speech, at the Calcutta Corporation on September 27, 1930, Bose had envisaged a synthesis of socialism and fascism incorporating the elements of justice, equality and love which formed the basis of socialism and the efficiency and discipline of fascism From the testimony of the noted revolutionary Satish Pakrashi who was imprisoned at Alipore Jail, Calcutta, along with Bose in 1930 it is known that Bose was enamoured of the discipline and organization of Italy under Mussolini and considered a powerful leader like him, a role model for a country like India where there were so many diversities. He visualised the India of the future developing on the basis of a synthesis of some of the central elements of nationalism, socialism and fascism.[153] He later used the term communism in place of socialism but retained fascism as an ingredient of his proposed system. From Bose's reference to fascism in his Mayoral speech, it can be inferred that he took cognizance of the positive aspects of fascism as early as the early thirties. This is also evident from his Rangpur address, where he stated "There is a minimum truth in all isms. We desire what is true in Socialism but the discipline, unity and obedience fostered by fascism, cannot be rejected."[154] This clearly shows that while Bose did not align himself ideologically with fascism, he discovered certain features in it, which were worthy of emulation. Bose was not rigid in his outlook and while he did not believe in imported ideologies, he was not averse to the adoption of certain features from foreign systems, which he considered suitable for Indian condition.

Bose also developed his own vision of what India should be like in the future. In a speech at the All India Naujawan Bharat Sabha, he said that

justice, equality, freedom, discipline and love were the five principles, which should constitute the basis of India's collective life.[155] It is instructive to note that Bose maintained a consistent stand on the importance of discipline in national life but also punctuated it with a spirit of humanism manifested in the virtue of love. This implies that Bose's emphasis on discipline did not cast him in the mould of a ruthless dictator typified by Hitler or Mussolini. He emphasized on discipline in order to eradicate indolence, truancy, dereliction of duty and petty internal squabbles. From the testimony of Sekhar Sen, it is known that in most of his speeches, Bose emphasized on discipline as the key to national unity. He deplored the tendency of Indians to shirk responsibility with flimsy excuses. Here he wanted to emulate the example of England.[156]

Bose's emphasis on love alongside discipline implies that he wanted socialism with a human face, that is to say, a system where basic human values were respected. The roots of his philosophical position, envisaging love as the essence of reality enunciated in his autobiography, *An Indian Pilgrim*, may, thus, be traced to the trends in his thought process in the early thirties. Bose's nephew, Pradip Bose, writes that no modern socialist doctrine mentions love as one of the basic values of socialism. The concepts of equality and justice can be legalized and given an institutional shape, but bereft of love, these may become mechanical and bureaucratic. Love or compassion introduces the human element into the institution and generates the spirit of active caring and sharing so essential to socialism.[157] Thus, Bose's concept of socialism had something novel in it.

In this connection, Bose's idea on Municipal socialism which he envisaged while he was the Mayor of Calcutta Corporation may be regarded as the practical application of his philosophy of love.[158] In his Mayoral speech, on September 27, 1930, he said, "I am prepared to confess that the dream that I have in my mind is that of a free India with a social order of a body politic based on the universal principles of justice, equality and love."[159] He reaffirmed his commitment to the ideal of service envisaged by C.R. Das and sought to transform the Corporation from a bureaucratic into a welfare-oriented body attuned to civic needs and aspirations. As Mayor of the Corporation, he addressed himself to the problem of poor tenants and also poor employees and menials.[160] He also identified himself with the cause of the depressed classes. While addressing a large gathering of depressed classes at Albert Hall, Calcutta on November 10, 1930, he assured them of his support in the just cause.[161]

As mayor of the Corporation, Bose made attempts to operationalize his concept of municipal socialism. From the report on the municipal administration of Calcutta for 1929-30, it is known that special attention was paid to water supply and a new supply station was set up at Palta. A chlorinating plant was installed at Tallah and schemes were also initiated to update the drainage system. Much work was done in the field of primary education and on March 31, 1930; the number of free primary schools of the Corporation was 214 as against 199 at the end of the previous year. Steps were taken by the Primary Education Committee of the Corporation to make primary education universal, free and compulsory. Charitable dispensaries were also set up to provide medical relief to poor patients.[162]

From the above highlights of Bose's work as Mayor, it is clear that his concept of municipal socialism had a humanitarian orientation and was inspired by the ideal of service to the people. His own background of social service along with the influence of Vivekananda and C.R. Das largely determined his policy line as Mayor. Bose continued the policy he had pursued during his brief earlier tenure as C.E.O when he had endeavoured to transform the Corporation from a bureaucratic organization to a popular body. This is clear from the agenda adopted by him on October 17, 1930, which emphasized on prompt attention to the complaints of the public, suppression of corruption, outdoor inspection and surprise visits, etc.[163] Emphasis was also placed on punctuality in attendance and observance of prescribed rules along with greater efficiency and prompt despatch of work.[164] This was in consonance with Bose's insistence on the norms of discipline that alone could ensure efficiency of work.

From the above analysis, it is clear that the roots of the values of liberty, equality, justice, discipline and love eloquently championed by Bose as central ingredients of India's national life, may be traced to his tenure as Mayor of the Corporation. It, thus, reflects a continuity in his thought. Bose's vision of a future India, therefore, developed further during his tenure as Mayor.

While Bose did not subscribe to the Marxian theory of class struggle, he did cherish dreams of a classless society. This is known from a letter that he wrote to Barindra Kumar Ghosh, brother of Aurobindo Ghosh, in 1930, excerpts from which have been published. In this letter he spoke of his vision of a free and classless society.[165] However, he did not want such a society to be established through a violent class struggle. Thus, though

certain features and elements in his thought bore a superficial resemblance to Marxism, there was a fundamental difference because Bose did not accept any of the central tenets of Marxism, like class struggle and economic determinism. He was rooted in Indian culture, tradition and history. Bose did not get the opportunity to elaborate his ideology while he was in India perhaps because he had little time for introspection and reflection on ideology. He was constantly involved in the politics of the freedom struggle and it is necessary to study his reaction to developments in this period in order to understand the development of his political thought.

Bose's Response to Political Developments in India

This period was a very important phase in India's struggle for independence. This was the time when the Congress passed an unequivocal resolution adopting *Purna Swaraj* as its goal at the Lahore Congress of 1929. This was also when the British Government sent an official commission to India to see how much more self government could be given to Indians and this was in consonance with the Government of India Act, 1919. This period also marked the re-emergence of Gandhi into the central arena of the Congress at a time when the movement itself appeared to be pulling at its seams and the Muslim League under Jinnah was preparing to go its separate way. Gandhi planned the Civil Disobedience Movement as a concerted attempt against the British government. It was to begin with the disobeying of unjust laws and therefore, was an advance over non-cooperation.

So far as Bose as concerned, he maintained a consistent stand on the issue of India's self-determination. He also took an active part in the boycott of the Simon Commission that contained no Indian member. This was seen as an affront to Indians whom the British considered incapable of drawing up a constitution acceptable to all. Bose was of the view that the constitution of a free India should guarantee her national sovereignty and this fact should be accepted by the British government. However, the Simon Commission that consisted of only white members would never concede sovereignty to India.[166] At the Lahore Congress of 1929, which decided on a mass movement, Bose had proposed the immediate non-payment of taxes, for strikes whenever and wherever possible and a parallel government. This was far more radical,

than what Gandhi visualized and Bose's proposals were all defeated. His proposals are, however, significant because these are the ideas, which later developed into his national demand in 1938-39.

Bose, however, recognized the importance of Gandhi's civil-disobedience movement and the salt *satyagraha,* which commenced on April 6, 1930.[167] He noted appreciatively that the movement was marked by widespread participation of women.[168] He also recognized Gandhi's role in arousing the entire countryside and working up national feelings throughout the coutnry.[169] However, the tempo of the civil disobedience movement never reached the same level in Bengal as the non-cooperation movement had done under the effective central leadership of C.R. Das. In fact, there was the highest incidence of violence and terrorist activities but the movement itself was fragmented. Bose did not provide the kind of leadership that C.R. Das provided and the Bengal Congress was faction ridden. Bose and J.M. Sengupta of the Bengal Congress set up rival organizations to conduct civil disobedience and even at the height of the movement, spent a lot of time electioneering for the Calcutta Corporation. The Bengal Congress in fact failed to utilize the circumstances to harness the existing social tensions to the anti-imperialist cause. Recent research has shown that communal disturbances in Bengal were often an expression, though distorted, of social problems and riots often resulted from attacks on *taulkdars, zamindars* and moneylenders. Bose did not want class war and other Bengali urban Congress leaders too, did not provide the kind of radical nationalist leadership that was required. The communal leadership could ultimately utilize social tensions to their advantage.[170]

Although Gandhi was initially uncompromising as evident from his joint letter with Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru from Yeravada jail, on August 15, 1930, where he unequivocally reiterated his demand for a complete national government,[171] he ultimately responded to Viceroy Lord Irwin's conciliatory gestures and subsequently the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed on March 5, 1931. According to the terms of this Pact, Gandhi agreed to suspend civil disobedience and participate in the deliberations of the Second Round Table Conference to be held in London in 1931. Lord Irwin on his turn, agreed to release all political prisoners.[172] Bose was critical of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact but he did not oppose it in the open Congress session at Karachi, in 1931.[173] He was however, extremely disappointed when Gandhi was unable to induce the Viceroy to commute the death sentences on Bhagat Singh and his

comrades though Bose had tried to impress upon him the need to pressurize the Viceroy in order to save the lives of the three revolutionaries.[174] However, Bose did not rebel against Gandhi though he was full of praise for Bhagat Singh and his colleagues. This increased the suspicion of the British government about his complicity in revolutionary acts. In this connection the question, as to whether Bose at this point of time, contemplated an armed struggle against British imperialism, needs to be considered.

Bose's Idea of Armed Struggle

While Bose was tacitly sympathetic towards revolutionary acts of violence, he assigned priority to a wholesale-armed revolt, which alone he felt, could force the British to quit India. He had a clear and realistic perception of its logistical aspects and attached importance to the need for launching an armed struggle at the opportune moment. The time was not yet propitious but Bose had become convinced about its inevitability in the future that he subsequently expressed in his book, *The Indian Struggle*. There is ample evidence of his intrinsic belief in violence. Amita Ghosh, in her doctoral thesis on Bose, argues that Bose's idea of armed struggle against British imperialism had originated at an early stage. Vincent Shean describes Bose as "frank believer in violence."[175]

From the testimony of Sisir Kumar Bose, it is known that, as far back as the early thirties Bose used to privately discuss with his brother Sarat Chandra Bose his plans for forcible capture of power through armed assault on British imperialism.[176] From the manifesto of the Hindustan Samyavadi Sangha, said to have been drafted by Bose, it is known that he rejected Gandhi's interpretation of the *Gita* in terms of nonviolence which had no place in Indian philosophy.[177]

Thus, when he began to tacitly express his lack of faith in non-violence as the only means for liberating India, he did not think in terms of inciting sporadic acts of violence but rather the a creation of an atmosphere where the people would be geared to the idea of a military assault on an all-India basis. A telegram from the Home Political Department to the Government of Bombay on December 12, 1928, noted, "Nehru and Bose were undoubted leaders of the new movement. In the last few months, independence has ceased to be an academic ideal. We are faced now with a party who it would

seem mean to translate it into a definite policy and to organize themselves with a view to obtaining their object by force. There is no doubt that Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose do not mean to stop at words. They are preparing for action. . . Indeed while the language of non-violence is usually maintained, the thoughts are clearly those of violence."[178]

Another telegram from the Government of Bengal to the Home Department on August 27, 1929, mentioned that Bose had led a procession to Hazra Park, Calcutta, on August 11. 1929, which offered violent resistance to the police and also circulated inflammatory leaflets.[179]

Bose also thought in terms of creating a spirit of revolt in the British Indian Army, a large segment of which was recruited from the peasantry. Their loyalty, he felt, may be destroyed through a peasant's movement and a direct appeal to their class interests It also appears from the testimony of Bose's nephew Amiya Nath Bose, that while Bose was imprisoned at Madras in August, 1932, he wrote a thesis where he advocated attempts to infiltrate into the British Indian Army and police Forces.[180] The government was thoroughly convinced that Bose abetted acts of violence and on January 2, 1932, he was arrested. His health broke down in prison and he was allowed to go to Europe for medical treatment. He set sail on February 23, 1933. A new chapter in his political career began in Europe.

From the above analysis, it follows that during 1928-32, Bose emerged as a national leader with a militaristic outlook, which foreshadowed his future role as commander of the INA Bose came very close to the Bengal revolutionaries during this period and his connection with them greatly influenced his future course of action. Though he did not immediately envisage armed struggle, yet he devoted serious thought to it. For the time being, he wanted to prepare the groundwork for an all-out mass-movement against British imperialism through extensive propaganda of the idea of complete independence. This was the prelude to Bose's future advocacy of an uncompromising, comprehensive and militant movement against British imperialism at the Haripura and Tripuri sessions of the Congress in 1938 and 1939. Furthermore, Bose for the first time developed a specific ideology of action and also derived certain elements that became central ingredients of his ideological evolution in the future. Bose was yet to distinguish himself as a thinker and his role during the said period was predominantly that of an activist. However, he was an activist with a vision of the future and the seeds of a thinker in the years ahead, were laid.

While the idea of complete independence, had been expressed earlier by Aurobindo Ghosh, no other Congress leader before Bose, had talked of a parallel government.

Bose's activities during this period were not confined to Bengal alone as he made extensive tours of India as the spokesman of the Independence League and also addressed youth conferences in Punjab, Maharashtra, Nagpur, etc. Even as Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation, he undertook extensive tours of north India where he received a rousing reception, particularly at Amritsar. He was also accorded a civic welcome at Karachi. During his visit to Bombay, he was acclaimed by large crowds and enthusiastically welcomed by Youth leagues and local Congress leaders.[181] It clearly follows from this that Bose was gradually developing a mass base at the all India level.

During the first phase of his political career, Bose had been entirely under the shadow of his mentor C.R. Das. In the second phase, he had to function without his mentor and thus displayed independence of thought and action. Apart from this, Bose's career between 1928-32 was essentially a continuation of the earlier phase (1921-27), because he amplified and articulated many of the ideas he had expressed during that period. Some novel elements were also introduced, for instance, his emphasis on martial spirit and the women's movement. The past, present and future were inseparably linked in the life of Bose and a thread of continuity ran through his entire political career signifying an extension of the past and an anticipation of the future.

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22. See Bose, n. 20, p. 63.
23. Ibid, p. 64-65.
24. Ibid, p. 85.
25. Sisir Kumar Bose, ed., *Netaji Collected Works,* Vol.5 (Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta, 1985), p. 273.
26. Ibid.
27. For Bose's objection to the renunciation of worldly life by Aurobindo

see Dilip Kumar Roy, *Smriticharan (Surkavya Sangsad, Calcutta, 1987),* pp. 272-273. See also Bose's undated letter to Barindra Kumar Ghosh, brother of Aurobindo Ghosh, where he says, "the Aurobindo of the age of Bandemataram was not the same as the Aurobindo of Pondicherry. *Lokmat* (Calcutta), January 23, 1997, p. 9. For Aurobindo's views during the Second World War, see A.B. Purani, *Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo* (Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry, 1982) Amalendu De, ed., *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Indian Independence and on war and Peace* (Sri Aurobindo Samiti, Calcutta, 1999).

28. Sisir Kumar Bose, ed., *Netaji Collected Works,* Vol.3 (Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta, 1981), p. 132.
29. Letter from S.C. Maikap to the researcher, September 19, 1999.
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33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Major Satya Gupta, "Kolikata Congress" in Sailesh Dey, ed., *Agniyuga* (Purna Prakasan, Calcutta, 1986), p. 53.
36. Cited in Girish Chandra Maiti, ed., *Netaji Prasasti Smarak Grantha* (Digha Vidyabhavan, Midnapore, 1996), p. 27.
37. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, December 22, 1928.
38. Kazi Nazrul Islam, "Fall in War," *Saptahik Saogat* (Calcutta), April-May, 1928, cited in Rafikul Islam, *Kazi Nazrul Islam* (Mallik Brothers, Dhaka, 1982), pp. 360-363.
39. Cited in Prasanta Kumar Pal, *Rabindranath and Subhas Chandra* (Rabindra Bhawan, Santiniketan, 1999), p. 17.
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43. Amalendu Ghosh, "Netaji Subhas Chandra O B.V.", *Rakhal Benu* (Calcutta), 1996, p. 87.
44. Samar Guha, *Netajir Mat O Path* (Asutosh Library, Calcutta, 1948), pp. 39-40.
45. See Bose, n. 20, p. 24.
46. Ibid.

47. Ibid, p. 151.
48. Subhas Chandra Bose, *Crossroads* (Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta, 1981), p. 22.
49. Leonard Gordon, *Brothers against the Raj* (Viking, New Delhi, 1990), p. 191.
50. Personal interview With Amalendu Ghosh, December 15, 1997, and December 20, 1997, Calcutta.
51. Agamani Lahiri, *Netaji O Rani Jhansi Bahini* (Jayashree Prakasan, Calcutta, 1998), p. 66.
52. Sumit Mukerji, "Yogirdristite Deshanayak Subhas Chandra", in Arun Kumar Gupta, ed., *Deshanayak Subhas Chandra,* Vol. II (Bangiya Jatiya Siksha Parishad, Calcutta, 1999), pp. 167-168.
53. Interview in *The Statesman* (Calcutta), January 23, 1997.
54. Personal interview with Uma Devi, June 11, 1998, Calcutta.
55. Personal interview with Chittabrata Palit March 24, 1998, Calcutta. This observation is significant because one should be careful not to interpret Bose's military image as the prototype of a dictator like Mussolini or Hitler.
56. Major Satya Gupta, "Netaji Subhas Chandra O Mukti Fauz" in *Rakhal Benu*, see n. 43, p. 128.
57. Chittabrata Palit, *Nana Subhas Chandra* (Vision Publishers Calcutta, 1997), p. 33. Girish Chandra Maiti, "Bisistha Itihashbider Subhas Mulyayan", *Jayashree* (Calcutta), Vol. 63, No. 9, January 1999, p. 202.
58. See Bose, n. 3, p. 360.
59. Personal interview with Bimal Dasgupta, Midnapore, November 18, 1998.
60. See Bose, n. 20, pp. 31-32.
61. For details, see Amales Tripathi, *Swadhinata Sangrame Bhaarter Jatiya Congress* (Ananda Publishers, Calcutta, 1995), p. 141.
62. Ganesh Ghosh, "Surya Sen, Mastarda", in *Agniyuga,* see n. 28, p. 66.
63. Gopal Lal Sanyal, *Je Kathar Sesh Nei* (Jayashree Prakasan, Calcutta, 1985), p. 227.
64. See Ghosh, n. 62, p. 66.
65. Arun Chandra Guha, 'Congress Leadership of Transmission', *Forward* (Calcutta), June 17, 1939. Cited in Pramanik, n. 4.
66. *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta), December 30, 1928, *Forward* (Calcutta), December 30, 1928.
67. Ananata Lal Singh, *Chattagram Yuba Bidroha*, Vol. I (San and Co., Calcutta, 1968), p. 233.
68. Ibid, p. 239.

69. Personal interview with Ardhendu Shekhar Guha, Calcutta, October 15, 1999.
70. Personal interview with Sailen Neogi, Calcutta, September 28, 1997.
71. Ananta Lal Singh, *Agnigarva Chattagram* (Vidyodaya Library Private Limited, Calcutta, 1968), p. 261.
72. Ibid.
73. See Bose, n. 20, p. 94
74. Speech at the All India Naujawan Bharat Sabha, Karachi, April 5, 1931. Ibid, pp. 159-9 ; See also his statement on January 25, 1931, Ibid., p. 144, and his speech at Maharashtra youth Conference on December 22, 1931, Ibid, p. 242.
75. See Soumyendra Kumar Gupta, "Behrampurey Mastarda: Kichu Jignasa, Kichu Anuman", in Amalendu De, ed., *Surya Sen O Swadhinata Sangram* (Prakash Bhavan, Calcutta, 1995), p. 51. See also Kalpana Dutta, "Mastarda Smritikatha", in ibid., p. 65. See Sudhi Pradhan, *Subhas Chandra, Bharat O Akshashakti* (National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1997), p. 28.
76. Sudhangshna Dasgupta, "Subhas Chandrer Sambandhe Kichu Katha" in Dibyajyoti Majumdar, ed., *Netaji Subhas Chandra Basu Janma Satabarshiki Samarak Grantha* (Department of Information and Culture, Govt. of West Bengal, 1997), p. 52. See Guha, n. 65.
77. See Bose, n 3. p. 338.
78. See Singh, n. 67, p. 263.
79. Personal interview with Sushil Khastagir, Calcutta, October 31. 1997. Personal interview with Subrata Bose, son of Sarat Chandra Bose, Calcutta, October 25, 1997. See Singh, n. 71, p. 258-259. Personal interview with Anil Chandra Nag, Calcutta, December 31, 1997.
80. Personal interview with Bimal Dasgupta, Midnapore, November 18, 1998.
81. Personal interview with Prabhangshu Pal, Calcutta, December 25, 1997.
82. See Bose, n. 14, p. 130.
83. Personal interview with Bimal Dasgupta, Midnapore on December 15, 1998.
84. Bimal Dasgupta, "Sedin Peddie Ke Hatya Kare Chhilam", in Agniyuga, n. 35, pp. 139-140.
85. The federal scheme has been explained in detail in Chapter 7.
86. See Dasgupta, n. 80.
87. Personal interview with Manohar Mukherjee, Calcutta, January 4, 1998.
88. Nepal Majumdar, *Rabindra Nath O Subhas Chandra,* (Saraswat Library, Calcutta, 1968), p. 43.

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93. Personal interview with Samarendra Basu Thakur, Calcutta, September 28, 1997.
94. Arun Kumar Roy, ed., *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette, Subhas Chandra Bose Birth Centenary Number* (The Calcutta Municipal Corporation, Calcutta, 1997), p. 116.
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97. Asitava Das, *Diner Seshe, Shaheed Dinesh Guptar Jiban O Sahitya* (Patralekha, Calcutta, 1997), p. 38.
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99. For details, see Chapter 6.
100. See Bose, n. 20, pp. 155-6.
101. Dilip Kumar Roy, *Netaji The Man Reminiscences* (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1996), p. 162.
102. Pabitra Mohan Roy, *Netajir Secret Service* (Agrani Book Club, Calcutta, 1992), p. 99.
103. Amiya Chakrabarti, "Subhas Chandra" in Biswanath Dey, ed., *Subhas Smriti* (Sahityam, Calcutta, 1975), p. 264.
104. See Bose, n. 25, p. 248.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid, p. 253.
107. Bose's speech at Bombay Opera House, May 22, 1928, see Bose, n. 10, p. 178.
108. Subhas Chandra Bose, "Unity of India, Past and Present", *The Oracle* (Calcutta) Vol. VII, January, 1985, pp. 14-15.
109. See Bose, n.10, p. 32.
110. Ibid, p. 34-35.
111. Statement on January 1, 1928, Ibid, p. 43.
112. Ibid, p. 34-35.
113. Speech at Kushthia on March 26, 1928. Ibid., pp. 97-98.

114. Ratanlal Chakravarti, *Bangladesher Dalil O Sangbadpatrey Netaji Subhas* (Progressive Publishers, Calcutta, 1997), p. 238.
115. Nemai Sadhan Bose, *Deshanayak Subhas Chandra*, (Ananda Publishers, Calcutta, 1997), pp. 106-107.
116. Sumit Mukerji, "Subhas Chandra O Jatiya Sanghati", in Arun Kumar Gupta, ed., *Deshnayak Subhas Chandra*, Vol. I. (Bangiya Jatiya Sikhsha Parishad, Calcutta, 1998), p. 58.
117. Speech on February 24, 1928, Bose, n. 25, p. 239.
118. Speech delivered at Howrah on February 28, 1928. See Bose, n. 10, p. 75.
119. Sunil Das, ed., *Subhas Rachanavali*, Vol. 2 (Jayashree Prakashan, Calcutta, 1987), p. 54-55.
120. See Bose, n. 14, p. 87
121. Aparajita Goppi, 'Netaji O Nari Samaj' in *Netaji Subhas Chandra Basu Janmasatabarashiki Smarak Grantha*, see n, 76, p. 139.
122. See Sumit Mukerji, "The Nationalist Succession from Vidyasagar to Subhas Chandra", in Radharaman Chakravarti, ed., *Netaji and India's Freedom* (Netaji Institute for Asian Studies, Calcutta, 1998), pp. 16-35.
123. Sunil Das, ed., *Subhas Rachanavali*, Vol.3 (Jayashree Prakashani, Calcutta, 1989), p. 29.
124. See Bose, n. 14, p. 87. Personal interview with Sobhanlal Mukherjee, Calcutta, December 12, 1998.
125. Shanti Das, *Arunbanhi* (Basumati Sahitya Mandir, Calcutta, 1967), p. 47. Santosh Kumar Adhikari *Netaji Subhas Chandra Byaktitwa O Rajnaitik Darshan* (Sribhumi Publishing Company, Calcutta, 1990) p.1.
126. See Bose n. 20, p. 155.
127. This was the period of massive labour upsurges with strikes being organized in the railways, cotton textile and jute industries. There was also considerable Communist penetration into trade unions. The working class was also getting involved politically and this is evident at the Calcutta session of the Congress when the workers and peasants led a massive demonstration.
128. Speech at Maharastra Provincial Conference, See Bose, n. 25, p. 246.
129. Nirban Basu, "Subhas Chandra O Bharater Sramik Andolan" in *Samaj Samikasha* (Calcutta), 1997, pp. 58-60.
130. See Sanyal, n. 63, p. 158.
131. Manju Chattopadhyay, "Subhas Chandra Bose – An Architect of the Calcutta Corporation" in Muchkund Dubey, ed. *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose The Man And His Vision* (Har Anand, New Delhi, 1998), p. 97.

132. Personal interview with Gautam Chattopadhyay, Calcutta, February 23, 1999.
133. See Bose, n. 20.
134. Ibid, p. 196.
135. Ibid, p. 199.
136. Personal interview with Gautam Chattopadhyay, Calcutta, February 23, 1999.
137. See Bose, n. 10, p. 251.
138. Sankari Prasad Basu, *Samakalin Bharate Subhas Chandra*, Vol. II (Mandal Book House, Calcutta, 1997), p. 392.
139. Gautam Chattopadhyay, *Subhas Chandra Bose, The Indian Leftists and Communists* (Peoples' Publishing House, New Delhi, 1997), p. 13.
140. Nirban Basu, "Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian Labour" in Amitava Mukherjee, see n. 96, p. 114.
141. See Das, n. 10, p. 255.
142. For details, see Gautam Chattopadhyay, *Bengal Electoral Politics and Freedom Struggle* (Indian Council of Historical Research, new Delhi, 1984).
143. Personal interview with Gautam Chattopadhyay, Calcutta, February 23, 1999.
144. See Bose, n. 20, p. 153.
145. Ibid, p. 152.
146. Ibid.
147. Ibid.
148. Ibid.
149. See Bose, n. 14, p. 135.
150. Ibid.
151. Pradip Bose, *Growing up in India* (Minerva, Calcutta, 1972), p. 192-193.
152. See Tripathi, n. 61.
153. See Bose, n. p. 129. See Satish Pakrashi, *Agnidiner Katha* (National Book Agency limited, Calcutta 1947), p. 164-165.
154. See Bose, n. 10, p. 90.
155. Ibid, p. 151-152.
156. Sekhar Sen, *Balya Smriti Subhas Chandra* (Sohini Sagnik Publications, Calcutta, 1996) p. 29.
157. Pradip Bose, *Subhas Bose and India today* (Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1999), p. 302.
158. Bose was elected Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation at a special meeting of the Corporation on August 22, 1930.

159. See Bose, n. 20, p. 133.
160. See Roy, n. 94, p. 112.
161. Ibid., p. 110.
162. See Roy, n. 94, pp. 125-127.
163. Ibid, p. 98
164. Ibid.
165. *Lokmat* (Calcutta), January 23, 1997. p. 9.
166. For details, see Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India* (Macmillan India Limited, Madras, 1983), pp. 265-7.
167. For details, see Sarkar, n. 166, pp. 265-267, Judith Brown, *Gandhi and Civil Disobedience* (University Press, Cambridge, 1977).
168. See Bose, n. 3, p. 203.
169. Ibid, p. 201-202.
170. See Sarkar, n. 166, pp. 301-303.
171. See Sarkar, n. 166, p. 294.
172. See Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress* Vol. I (Padma Publications Ltd. Bombay, 1949), pp. 437-439.
173. Bose's reactions to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and the Round Table Conference have been detailed in Chapter 6.
174. For details on Gandhi's attitude towards Bhagat Singh and his comrades and the repercussion of their subsequent execution on Gandhi-Bose relations, see Chapter 6.
175. Amita Ghosh, *Netaji, Realist and Visionary* (Vijayashree Publishers, Varanasi, 1986), p. 57. Vincent Shean, M*ahatma Gandhi, A Great Life in Brief.* (Publication Division, Govt. of India, 1986), p. 130.
176. Sisir Kumar Bose, "The Indian National Army" in Nisith Ranjan Ray et al, eds, *Challenge, A Saga of India's Struggle Freedom* (People Publishing House. New Delhi, 1984), p. 575.
177. Horace Williamson, *India and Communism* (Editions India, Calcutta, 1976), pp. 233-234.
178. Govt. of India, *Home Political File No. 179/1929* (National Archives Janpath, New Delhi).
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180. See Williamson, n. 177, pp. 233-34. Amiya Nath Bose, "Bose Brothers and Indian Struggle" in *Netaji Subhas Chandra Basu Janma Satabarshiki Smarak Grantha*, n. 76, p. 202.
181. For details, see Roy, n. 94, p. 151-158.

Chapter - V

The Thinker Emerges (1933-36)

Bose's exile in Europe was a turning point in his intellectual evolution. His ideas as well as his outlook on life simultaneously underwent a process of amplification, concretization and transformation. When he returned from captivity for the second time he was a changed person in many respects though the essential continuity in his life and thought remained unimpaired. It is necessary in this context to analyse in some depth Bose's role as 'India's ambassador with a cause.'[1]

Bose's Role in Europe

Bose was of the view that every Indian abroad must consider himself as an unofficial ambassador of his country.[2] He had vigorously stressed the need of propaganda at the national level, but had not yet expressed himself on the urgency of foreign propaganda. However, when he was exiled in Europe, he made it a point to present the case of India's' political freedom before the European public and sought to create a favourable international response to the issue of India's freedom through the mobilization of world public opinion.

Bose emphasized the need to counter anti-India propaganda by European writers, missionaries and historians by exposing the fallacies and inaccuracies in their accounts of India. This could be done by projecting the richness of India's culture and civilization through which she could make a positive contribution to the culture of the world. Other methods could be through the cultivation of contacts with leading European intellectuals, the creation of an elaborate institutional mechanism for bringing the question of India's political independence to the forefront and finally, the exploration of avenues of cooperation between India and the European countries at the cultural and commercial levels.

Though Bose had not spoken directly of foreign propaganda while

he was in India, he had taken note of the attempt of foreign writers to project a negative and distorted picture of India. He took particular exception to an anti-Indian book entitled *Mother India* by an American lady, Catherine Mayo, which created angry reactions in India. Speaking at the Noakhali Youth Conference on May 17, 1931, he had said, "The English had used the last weapon in their armoury against India through Miss Mayo". Bose's sustained campaign against the book, forced the British government to ban it in India.[3] While he was in Vienna for medical treatment, he took serious exception to offensive anti-Indian advertisements in lecture halls and also pictures of dubious credibility published in the Viennese paper, *Wiener Bilder*, on June 30, 1933, portraying the burning of widows in India and dead bodies lying uncared for in the streets. He was also most vocal about films like 'India Speaks', 'Bengali' and 'Everybody Loves Music', which he felt spread disinformation about India.[4] Bose's disapproval of these was published in the *Forward* on March 1, 1935, under the heading "Drain Inspectors At It Again-Dirty Film About India in America- Subhas Chandra Bose's Suggestion to Indian Film Producers." This created a great uproar in journalistic circles in India, particularly in Calcutta, as evident from a report published in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* entitled, "Anti-Indian Propaganda through Films, Calcutta Citizen's Spirited Resistance."[5] In this connection, a parallel may be drawn between Bose and Vivekananda who, during his first trip to America, had to counter many similar charges levelled against India by foreign writers with the purpose of tarnishing her image. A book by Caleb Wright entitled *India and Its Inhabitants* published in 1858, had created an unfavourable opinion about India in America at the time of Vivekananda's visit. He had to make a sustained effort to combat the anti-India propaganda by writers and missionaries.[6] However, the objective of Vivekananda's role in America was much broader than that of Bose in Europe because Vivekananda's mission had been to proclaim the truth of the *Vedanta* and the spiritual superiority of the Indian civilization over that of the materialistic civilization of the West. Bose, in contrast, operated within the narrow range of a fixed political perspective because the question of India's political freedom was uppermost in his mind. Vivekananda had no such political objectives since the political struggle was still nebulous during this time. At the same time, it is noteworthy that, even within the narrow confines of political goals, Bose did not marginalize the wider cultural and civilizational aspects of image building. He did not limit himself to the negative function of countering anti-

Indian propaganda but also stressed the positive function of demonstrating India's civilizational superiority.

Bose was of the view that India had her own contribution to make to world civilization In his presidential address at the Central Province and Berar Students Conference on December 1, 1929, Bose had said that, India's mission is "firstly to save herself and thereafter make her own contribution to the sum total of the culture and civilization of the world."[7] In an article, "Passing through Cairo", Bose wrote, "India can boast of a very ancient culture and civilization. Our emphasis was not on the material basis of life but on the intellectual and spiritual."[8] He added that, "emphasis on the intellectual and spiritual side caused us to neglect the development of science and left us comparatively weak on the material and physical side of life. The glorious periods of our history were when we were able to strike the golden mean between the demands of spirit and matter, of the soul and of the body and thereby progress simultaneously on both fronts."[9] This exemplifies the pragmatic strain in Bose. He was not a materialist and his view of Indian civilization was essentially spiritual, but he did not envisage the complete rejection of the materialistic aspects of life. He thought of a balanced synthesis of materialism and spiritualism whereby the spiritual identity of the Indian civilization would be preserved and at the same time, the material aspects necessary for progress would also receive due attention.

Bose was acutely conscious of the need to create a cultural bridge between India and Europe and cultivated contacts with international cultural organizations like the Oriental Society of Warsaw, the Polish Indian Society, the Indo-Czech Association, etc. He made the acquaintance of oriental scholars like Professor Stanislaw, F. Michalski, Professor Lesny, (who was a well known Indologist) and others. He wanted to supplement cultural exchanges with economic cooperation and took the initiative in setting up the Austrian-Indian Association in Vienna for facilitating commercial interaction between India and Austria. He wrote to Professor Lesny on January 1, 1936, "India should have a balance of trade with Czechoslovakia."[10]

Bose's foremost concern was to bring to the forefront, the issue of India's political independence and make specific recommendations for creating an elaborate and extensive propaganda network at the international level. In an essay entitled, "India Abroad", Bose noted that while there was colossal ignorance about India, there was also a feeling of sympathy and interest.[11] In Bose's opinion, anti-Indian propaganda had to be countered and the world

had to be acquainted with the true Indian picture and also the positive achievements of the Indian people. There should be Indian representatives at every international conference and articles written and lectures given on India by prominent Indians abroad. Foreign scholars should be invited to India and mixed societies comprising of Indians and foreigners needed to be set up in every country. Propaganda through films and slides could also serve a very useful purpose.[12]

In a written address sent to the third Political Conference in London on June 10, 1933, Bose expatiated on various aspects of foreign propaganda. In his view, it was necessary for India to ventilate her manifold grievances at the international level. The points which deserved to be focused on were the ill treatment of political prisoners in India, vindictiveness of the government in issuing passports to Indians, the systematic practice of aeroplane bombing in India, particularly, in the North West Frontier Province for terrorizing helpless villagers, the arbitrary fixing of the exchange rate by England in a manner prejudicial to India's interests and the crippling burden of public debt with which the British government had saddled India. So far as the air attacks were concerned, he was referring to British bombing during the Civil disobedience Movement. There had been similar incidents earlier in Punjab during the Non-cooperation Movement.[13] Bose deplored the fact that the Indian National Congress had not realized the value and necessity of international propaganda, but expected his countrymen to realize its significance in the days to come.[14] According to Bose's testimony, it was C.R. Das who had opened his eyes to the necessity of making India known to foreign countries. He had even thought in terms of establishing a Pan-Asiatic League. He may, however, have been influenced by other sources for instance, the Soviet Communist Party's agitprop programme or the propaganda work of the Ghadr revolutionaries.[15] Bose reiterated address at the Gaya Congress of 1922, calling for the establishment of Congress agencies in America and every European country.[16] Here, Bose was also positively encouraged by the noted Indian nationalist Vithalbhai Patel, who was also exiled in Vienna and who was an enthusiastic champion of using propaganda to disseminate knowledge about British rule. In his last will before his death, Patel donated a part of his assets to Bose to be spent by him for publicity work on behalf of India's cause in other countries.[17]

In his subsequent political career, Bose was a consistent advocate of foreign propaganda. In his presidential speech at Haripura, in 1938, he

stressed the need to form a nucleus of men and women sympathetic towards India in every country by using propaganda through the foreign press, Indian made films, art exhibitions, etc. It was also necessary, he believed, to develop personal contacts, and here, overseas Indian students could make a worthwhile contribution. There should be a close liaison between them and the Indian National Congress. The net effect would be to ensure that India and her culture became known and appreciated by people abroad.[18] The propaganda network ought to encompass Europe, Asia and Africa and also North, Central and South America.[19] He, however, stated that he did not like the word 'propaganda' which had an air of falsity about it.[20] Though he did not clarify this, yet it may be inferred that he did not conceive of propaganda as a mechanism for intrigue but rather as an image building measure. This is clear from his observation that, "Developing international contacts does not mean intriguing against the British Government...- all our methods should be above board."[21] He was, thus, a believer in transparency so far as the propaganda apparatus was concerned. Its aim was to present India in her true colours before the international public. He wanted to emulate the propaganda techniques employed by De Valera of Ireland, Dr. Masaryk and President Benes of Czechoslovakia. France and Britain also provided exemplary models. The British method of propaganda was considered by Bose to be subtle and manipulative. Britishers attended international congresses in every part of the world and British people from different walks of life regularly went abroad to lecture and foreign students were invited to Great Britain and offered scholar ships.[22] This corresponded with Bose's line of thinking. He was not so appreciative of the German method of propaganda, which was "crude, offensive and self-defeating."[23] From this it follows that Bose wanted to counter British imperialism by occasionally adopting British methods.

The above analysis shows that Bose appreciated the significance of propaganda for a modern state and wanted to use it as a vehicle of India's struggle for independence. This was something that none of his predecessors had attempted earlier. After the establishment of the Indian National Congress, eminent nationalists like Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee, Lokmanya Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, etc., propagated the Indian cause abroad but did not consciously focus on the need for campaigning in favour of complete independence. It was Bose who endeavoured to make propaganda an instrument of Congress policy for the first time, when he became Congress President in 1938. While he was in

Europe, he tried to pursue his idea of propaganda through writing books and articles and making speeches on India and its national movement.

While in Europe, he also traversed the continent visiting a number of countries. His exposure to the wider international scenario led him to imbibe many new experiences. His response to international developments also needs to be considered in this context.

Bose's Reaction to International Developments :

Bose evinced keen interest in international politics. During his period of exile in Europe, the international situation had become extremely volatile. The rise of Nazism in Germany under Hitler, fascism in Italy under Mussolini, the rise of Japan in the Far East, the Irish movement under De Valera, etc., were some of the significant international developments which attracted his attention. Bose was convinced that a country fighting for national independence couldn't remain isolated from the wider international events. These, he felt, had a bearing on the Indian nationalist movement. Dr. Radharman Chakravarti has remarked, "By and large, the top echelon of national leadership was more concerned with the management of nationalist aspirations at home than external relations of other nations. None the less, there were important exceptions – prominent among them being Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose."[24] A brief country-by-country survey of Bose's response to international developments is necessary in this context.

Bose and Nazi Germany

Bose visited Germany in 1933 when the Nazi Party under Hitler, was firmly entrenched in power. The essential features of Hitler's policy were: 1) the establishment of a totalitarian state based on iron discipline, 2) the proclamation of the racial superiority of the Germans over other races, 3) the determination to salvage Germany's lost honour by repudiating the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles (1919), which had imposed humiliating conditions on Germany and a systematic policy of aggrandizement for recovering the lost territories of Germany.[25] Bose appears to have been impressed by certain features of the German state, particularly, the disciplined

foundations of national life. This was in consonance with his emphasis on discipline as an essential ingredient of life. He had an open mind *vis-à-vis* all foreign countries irrespective of their ideology and was worthy of emulation in foreign systems. Sunil Gupta, a former I.N.A. Officer, is of the opinion that Bose's attraction for Germany was natural because Germany was one of the best disciplined nations in the World.[26] Bose is reported to have said in a private conversation that he had returned from Europe with the firm conviction that India needed at least twenty years of benevolent dictatorship after independence to save her from chaos. Italy and Germany were role models in this respect as they had built up their nation within a very short span of time.[27] It may be noted here that, Nazi Germany was a ruthless dictatorship while Bose preferred a benevolent dictatorship. He was impressed not by Nazism as an ideology but only some particular aspects of it, which might prove beneficial to India. Guy Wint and Peter Calvocoressi are of the opinion that, "The colourful side of Nazism appealed to him profoundly. Authoritarian rule of the party by a small caucus of leaders seemed to him to provide India with a novel form of government. Discipline before all else was what India seemed to need for overcoming the problems of division into separate castes and communities and for dealing with the great economic problem of poverty. The democratic type of government, which it might imitate from Great Britain, had the fatal weakness of permitting so much liberty, that the state might fall in pieces. Thus he found even the Nazi brutality brisk, salubrious and invigorating." Dr. Radharaman Charkarvarti is of the opinion that Bose appreciated the spectacular economic advancement of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy through a centrally controlled economy. At the same time, it may be noted that Bose did not consider the Nazi economic system as the ideal role model. This is evident from his observation at the Tokyo Imperial University in Germany had failed to reform the prevailing economic system, which was built up on a capitalistic basis.[28] Bose was evidently thinking in terms of the economic problems which Nazi Germany was apparently able to confront successfully India could face similar problems after independence and these may not find an easy solution through a permissive liberal democratic system. A certain amount of coercion may, therefore, be necessary even within the contours of democracy. At the same time, Bose was extremely critical of the racial outlook of Nazi Germany legitimized by Hitler, who called the freedom fighters of India "Asiatic Jugglers" and said that he would rather see India under British rule than

any other.[29] He protested against the German policy of racism, which affected Indian students in Germany and submitted a memorandum to the German Foreign Office Councilor on April 5, 1934, which noted that, "The most serious factor threatening friendly relations between Germany and India, is the unfortunate effect produced by the present race propaganda in Germany."[30] In a letter to Dr. Thierfelder of the Deutsch Akademic of Munich, on March 24, 1934, he wrote, "When I first visited Germany in 1933, I had hopes that a new German nation which had risen to a consciousness of its national strength and self respect, would instinctively feel a deep sympathy for other nations struggling in the same direction. Today I regret that I have to return to India with the conviction that the new nationalism of Germany is not only narrow but also arrogant and selfish."[31] Bose inspired student organizations abroad like the Indian Students Association. The Federation of Indian Students Abroad, The Hindustan Students Club, etc., to fight for their rights and also sought to counter the German policy of racism with a threat to boycott German goods. He wrote to Amiya Chakravarti on March 11, 1936, that he had fully supported the proposal of The Federation of Indian Students to boycott trade with Germany.[32] Krishna Bose has written that it was due to Bose's efforts that anti-Indian propaganda by German newspapers was partially curbed.[33] Thus, despite his admiration for certain aspects of Nazi Germany, Bose did not at any time compromise on India's national honour.

The late communist scholar Sudhi Pradhan has criticized Bose for his inability to realize the essential character of Nazism and fascism, which symbolised anti progressive forces.[34] This point needs to be examined further. Bose was greatly disillusioned with Nazi Germany as evident from his letter to Dr. Thierfelder mentioned earlier. In a statement dated October 12, 1936, Bose said, "I am opposed to Hitlerism whether in India within the Congress or in any other country."[35] At a press conference in Bombay, in 1935, Bose said that while there was much in Hitler's organization that was worth studying, he did not see how Hitler's principles could appeal to India because on the economic side, he was in the "hands" of the big capitalists, while politically he was pro British.[36] According to Girija Mukherjee who was very close to Bose, "Bose found the Nazi method of political control extremely disagreeable."[37] Kitty Kurti, an acquaintance of Bose, has testified to Bose's contempt for Nazism.[38] In an editorial in the *Forward Bloc* entitled "Deepening Crisis", dated August 31, 1940, Bose had said, "The black wings of the Nazi hawk are spread over England. Its startling success is regarded as a triumph

of barbarity over reason."[39] In yet another editorial entitled, "Whither the Baltic States" published in the *Forward Bloc* on July 27, 1940, Bose wrote that, "The doctrine of Nazism is abhorred by the rational world and it has forfeited all claim to humanism by its insistence on the glorification of violence and war. Nazism cannot guarantee peace to men nor would it let life bloom in its beauty."[40]

It is clear from the above that Bose had no illusions about Nazi Germany. He had admittedly written to the noted linguist Bata Krishna Ghosh on December 3, 1933, that, any struggle was impossible without dictatorship and so was post-war reconstruction. But until the *Samyavadi Sangha* (the party organization contemplated by Bose for post-independence India) was victorious, dictatorship should not be openly propagated. However, organization should be actually established on a dictatorial foundation.[41] Recently, an analyst, Somnath Roy, has inferred from this that Bose had hailed the dictatorship of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.[42]

Taking an overview of Bose's speeches and writings, it appears that his emphasis was mainly on democracy though he was a stickler for discipline. Bose wanted to maintain the spirit of democracy in independent India and nowhere in his speeches and writings is there any indication that he preferred arbitrary suppression of individual liberties or the perpetuation of a ruthless dictatorship.

Furthermore, even if it is admitted on the basis of his aforesaid letter, that Bose had temporarily become inclined towards dictatorship, there is no evidence to suggest that he accepted the Nazi or fascist systems as role models for India. Even a critic of Bose like M. Shivaram, who ascribed to Bose, a plan for dictatorship in India, admits that he thought of a benevolent autocracy adapted to Indian conditions. Dr. G.L. Adhya, believes that Bose imbibed the spirit of discipline very early in his career, long before his exposure to Hitler and Mussolini and that the allegation of his being pro-Hitler is wrong. Captain Laxmi Sehgal holds that Bose's emphasis on discipline has led many to confuse discipline with dictatorship. According to her, Bose never envisaged dictatorship in India and would have tried to solve India's problems through democratic means had he got the chance. Dr. Jasobanta Kar also observes that there was a strong military bias in Bose's character and ideas but this was never equivalent to a bias for Fascism. It was only the underlying military discipline and power of Fascism that appealed to him. He had no political or personal bias for Fascism; rather

he was opposed to it. His concept of militarism stood essentially for nationalism. Anil Roy, who was very close to Bose, has written that there could be no connection between the nationalism of Bose, which was based on the principle of equality of man, and the perverted nationalism of Nazi Germany.[43] Harihar Das and B.C.Rath have correctly stated that Bose's firm faith in militarism led his critics to equate it with a bias for fascism. However, unlike fascism that aimed at military supremacy with imperialistic overtones, Bose's militarism involved a dogged determination, a spirit of sacrifice, military discipline, and revolutionary ardour for freedom and nationalism.[44] Thus, Bose's visualization of future India was totally free from any bias for Hitlerism. Bose's evaluation of the implications of German foreign policy reveals a perceptive analysis of the international situation. He noted that one of the practical objectives of German foreign policy under Hitler was to annex Austria.[45] This proved correct, when in March 1938, Hitler achieved *Anschluss* or union with Austria. He also appears to have anticipated Hitler's invasion of Russia during the Second World War and wrote, "The Russian Colossus has often proved to be an enigma. It baffled Napoleon, the conqueror of Europe. Will it baffle Hitler?"[46] It may be inferred that during his exile in Europe, Bose foresaw the outbreak of the Second World War in the near future as the logical culmination of the German policy of expansionism.

Bose and Fascist Italy

In an analysis of Bose's political thought, his attitude towards fascist Italy is of significance. Bose had been nurtured in the tradition of Italian nationalists like, Mazzini, Garibaldi and Cavour and viewed Italy with interest. He attended the Asiatic Students Congress in Rome on December 22, 1934, and was impressed by the Italian leader Mussolini's view of Rome as the connecting link between Europe and Asia.[47] He met Mussolini twice in 1934. From the testimony of Lothar Frank, to whom Bose gave details of his conversation with Mussolini, it is known that Mussolini had said to Bose that if he preferred revolutionary methods to reformist ones, there was a chance to achieve India's independence. He also advised Bose to immediately prepare a plan of revolution and work continuously towards its realization.[48]

From Bose's account of his tour of Italy published in *Amrita Bazar*

Patrika, it is known that when Bose revisited Rome in 1935, he acquainted himself with the programmes of the Fascist Party and was allowed facilities to visit all the party offices. He obtained necessary information about the organization and administration of the Fascist Party.[49] Bose realized that the Fascist Party was engaged in the task of building a new nation in accordance with its own ideas and ideals where no one was separated from the state and the task of the party was to train citizens suitably for the state.[50] From this, it may be surmised that Bose, who developed a theory on the findings of the party in future India during his stay in Europe, derived inspiration from Mussolini's Fascist Party. At the same time, the Fascist Party, which was based on the ideals of duty, discipline and sacrifice, did not uphold certain values like liberty, equality and love, which Bose championed. Moreover, Bose was firmly committed to the idea of a socialist state in India while fascism was a patently anti-socialist doctrine.[51] He did not visualise the development of a fascist state in independent India though he wanted to imbibe some of its positive features.

Finally, Bose never subscribed to aggressive nationalism and imperialistic self-aggrandizement. In this connection, Bose's reaction to Mussolini's conquest of Abyssinia in 1935 should be mentioned. One of Bose's close associates in Berlin, A.C.Nambiar, reportedly saw a letter written by Bose to the Foreign Minister of Italy, supporting Italy's conquest of Abyssinia.[52] Since this letter has not been published anywhere, its authenticity cannot be verified. From the available source material it appears that Bose was critical of the Italian policy of imperialism. In an article "Europe Today and Tomorrow", Bose wrote, "Since Mussolini came to power in 1922, Italy has been thinking aggressively in terms of expansion, of a revival of the Roman Empire."[53] He also criticized the policy of appeasement of Great Britain, which "first challenged Italy and then beat a retreat before the bluff and swagger of Mussolini.[54]

Referring to the "Rape of Abyssinia,"[55] Bose wrote in an article entitled "The Secret of Abyssinia" in *Modern Review* in November 1935, that "The lesson is that in the 20th century, a nation can hope to be free only if it is strong from a physical and military point of view and is able to acquire all the knowledge which modern science can impart."[56] From this, it clearly follows that Bose believed that Abyssinia was overpowered by Italy because of the superior military power of the latter. Here, a continuity in his thought may be discerned because as far back as his college days, he had realized

that a nation aspiring to become independent, could not shirk its military obligations. [57] There was always the possibility of strong states vanquishing and enslaving the weak. Dr. Radharaman Chakravarti is of the opinion that "Bose's analysis of Italy's occupation of Abyssinia was similar to the modern critique of the myth of sovereign equality of nations. Some nations are more equal than other while a few and fewer still enjoy sovereignty in the real sense of the term. Intellectually and morally, Bose could be a severe critic of whoever the wrongdoer was." [58] However, in terms of influence on Bose's life, Mussolini ranked higher than Hitler. Captain Sushil Khastagir, Bose's close associate in the Indian National Army is of the view that Bose had greater admiration for Mussolini than Hitler because Mussolini had a larger popular base. [59] However, he never ideologically identified himself with fascism, which was contradictory to his own ideals and convictions. In this context, Bose's attitude towards the policy of expansionism of Japan in the Far East also requires analysis because like Italy, Japan too had adopted a policy of aggressive nationalism.

Bose's Response to the Rise of Japan in the Far East

Bose's attitude towards Japan is noteworthy because he subsequently aligned himself with Japan in his final bid to liberate India through armed struggle from outside. It may be questioned, whether Bose approved of the imperialist policy of Japan in the Far East. A noted scholar, Dr. Chittabrata Palit, is of the opinion that, Bose never criticized the aggressive policy of Japan. [60] However, this view does not appear to be totally correct. In an article published in the *Modern Review* in October 1937, entitled "Japan's Role in the Far East", Bose strongly criticized Japan's aggressive designs against China. He felt that, "Japan was interested in founding an empire and the consciousness of being an unconquered race, whets their imperialist appetite. Japan has been growing increasingly assertive not only in the Far East but in world affairs in general."[61] He was also critical of the "moribund League of Nations" which could not provide China with protection.[62] His sympathy for China was clear in his observation that, "with all one's admiration for Japan where such admiration was due, our whole heart goes to China in her own sake and for humanity. Out of the ashes of this conflict, she will

once again rise phoenix like as she has so often done in the past."[63] From this it appears that as in the case of Germany and Italy, Bose never supported Japan's policy of aggrandizement at the expense of China. Aggressive nationalism had no place in his agenda, and while he believed in India's world mission, it was not in terms of any imperialistic design. While he was President of the Indian National Congress, he was instrumental in sending a medical mission to China, which demonstrated his sympathy for her. The members of the medical mission were engaged in activity in the regions under the control of the Communist Party of China and assisted China on the war front in her struggle against Japan. It was operative in China from 1938 to 1943.[64] From this, it clearly follows that in the Sino-Japanese conflict, Bose's sympathy was with China. It may also be noted that, when he sought to liberate India with the help of Japan, Bose maintained a tough attitude in his dealings with Japan in order to ensure that Japan did not use him as a pawn From the testimony of Dr. Pabitra Mohan Roy of the Azad Hind Secret Service Department, it is known that Bose did not hesitate to serve show cause notices to Japanese officers who displayed a highhanded attitude towards the INA soldiers in the training camp. According to Mr. Jyoti Basu, Ex-Chief Minister of West Bengal, Bose would never have accepted any Japanese design to dominate India and would have fought against them if necessary. From the testimony of Lieutenant S.K.Sengupta, a close associate of Bose, it is known that in a meeting at Bangkok in 1945, Bose exhorted the INA soldiers to fight against Japan if she showed any intention to dominate India.[65] Japan's policy of aggressive imperialism possibly made him cautious in his attitude towards the Japanese and he made it a point to vindicate India's honour and prestige under all circumstances. Apart from Germany, Italy and Japan, Bose also evinced a keen interest in Ireland and the Irish freedom struggle. This had a direct impact on his visualization of the Indian struggle against British imperialism.

Bose and Ireland

Bose's interest in the Irish movement was in consonance with the nationalist tradition of the anti-imperialist struggle. A number of prominent Indian leaders like Lokmanya Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, etc., had been avidly interested in the Irish movement.[66] Vithalbhai Patel, who had set up the Indian Irish Independence League in Dublin in the 1920s, impressed Bose with the

urgency of visiting Ireland for the purpose of cementing ties of friendship between India and Ireland, whose common enemy was British imperialism. Bose was accorded a royal reception by President De Valera, J.J.Okelly of the Sinn Fein Party and the Mayor of Dublin, after his arrival in Ireland, on January 31, 1936. On February 2, 1936, he issued a statement in which he said, "I have come here in fulfilment of the request made to me by Vithalbhai Patel before his death to maintain contact between the Indian nationalist movement and Ireland."[67]

Bose had evinced keen interest in Ireland right from the beginning of his political career. In his book *The Indian Struggle,* he has stated that after the death of the noted revolutionary Jatin Das, a condolence message was received from the Irish leader Terrence McSweeny.[68] Thus, after reaching Ireland he paid homage at the grave of McSweeny.[69] Bose had three meetings with President De Valera during which the latter reportedly cautioned him that, by staying away from one's country, one could at best get some rhetorical support but nothing more. Amiya Chakravarti has reported Bose's version of his meetings with De Valera as confided to him personally by Bose in Europe.[70] Bose was so impressed by De Valera that he stated on February 9, 1936: "He is a man of determined mind with a quick grasp of essential things. My only regret is that I could not see him earlier."[71]

De Valera impressed Bose because like Bose, he did not believe in non-violence but rather in the liberation of his country through organized mass struggle. Secondly, from the memoirs of Michael Collins, the leader of the Irish Republican Army, whose manuscript was confiscated from all publishers by the British government, it is known that again like Bose, De Valera was firmly committed to the ideals of equal rights for all races without distinction, justice for the exploited and the workers, freedom for all suppressed nationalities and equal rights for men and women.[72]

Moreover, Bose was inspired by De Valera's strategy of seeking the help of America for the freedom of Ireland. An analogy may be drawn here between Bose's later decision to leave India with the objective of liberating her with the help of a foreign power. Leonard Gordon suggests that, Bose may have been familiar with the Irish axiom, "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity."[73] After returning to India, Bose constantly emphasized on the utilization of the international situation to India's advantage by capitalizing on England's difficulties during the Second World War.

Of all the leaders Bose met in Europe, De Valera influenced and inspired

him most. There was a difference between Ireland and Nazi Germany and also fascist Italy because Ireland did not have any imperialistic designs like the other two and De Valera's views were closest to those of Bose. Prof. Ashoke Mustafi observes that Bose derived the idea of a National Liberation Army from Ireland. [74] There is no direct corroborative evidence for this, but it may be true that Bose's idea of armed struggle against British imperialism was greatly inspired and shaped by De Valera who was one of the first to recognize the provisional Azad Hind Government under Bose in 1943.

While Bose was in Europe, the question that was uppermost in his mind was that of India's political freedom. However, he also devoted much attention to other aspects of national life in Europe like the party system, municipal administration, etc., which were worthy of emulation in India. His experiences had a considerable impact on the subsequent formulation and articulation of his political vision. Bose's impressions of Turkey and Vienna also deserve to be mentioned in this respect.

Bose on Turkey and Austria

Bose was greatly interested in municipal administration. The municipality of Vienna impressed him as evident from a letter addressed to the Mayor of Calcutta, from Vienna on May 11, 1933, in which he noted that, "What little I have already seen, has impressed me greatly. I feel very strongly that all this experience should be made available to the Corporation of Calcutta. Outside of Russia, Vienna is the most important Socialist municipality in the whole of Europe."[75] The keen interest evinced by Bose in municipal problems is clear from a letter from the Mayor of Vienna to the Mayor of Calcutta, dated, September 26, 1933, "Mr. Bose has been studying very carefully, our municipal institutions, and all the social welfare work for the poor and for children and I hope that he found many things which will prove to be useful to your city also."[76] Bose took a special interest in the municipality of Vienna because it was committed to the ideal of social welfare and service for the poor, which coincided with his own concepts on municipal socialism.

Bose's visit to Turkey had a decisive impact on his political ideology. He had been thinking for sometime in terms of a strong party for India as evident from his views on a *Samyavadi Sangha*, expressed in a letter to Satyendra Nath Majumdar on October 19, 1933,[77] which was later elaborated in an address sent to the Third Political Conference in London, on June 10,

1933. His visit to Turkey and subsequent acquaintance with the strong party system introduced by the Turkish leader, Kemal Pasha, influenced his ideological development to a great extent. Several other achievements of Turkey also impressed him. From the testimony of Lothar Frank, it is known that Bose was avidly interested in the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, under the leadership of the Unity and Progress Party of Kemal Pasha that introduced fundamental changes in the Turkish society. Bose wanted to explore how an oriental state, like Turkey could introduce social reforms and register technological progress within such a short period. He felt that India, which faced similar problems, could apply some of the socio cultural and administrative solutions to national problems devised by Turkey. Bose also gathered from Turkish leaders that, during the First World War, 700 German Officers and more than 8000 soldiers had been placed at the disposal of the Turkish army, but despite the presence of the German army in Turkey, she had been able to act independently. This might have influenced his subsequent decision to align himself with Germany, in 1941 for India's liberation.[78] Recalling his experiences in Turkey, while paying tribute to Kemal Pasha after his death when Bose was Congress President, he noted that he had introduced the Roman script in Turkey. This is interested because in his Haripura speech, Bose too, championed the idea of using the Roman script in India.[79] According to his own testimony, he was directly influenced by his Turkish experience. Lothar Frank testifies that Bose's experiences in Turkey strengthened his belief that a new nation could be built up only by a political party, which embodied the unity and determination of the whole people. The Turkish system, Bose noted was a democracy, but not have the purely western type and Kemal Pasha did not allow free play of individualism and undisciplined liberalism. Bose thought that if Kemal had opted for the western political crises and the foundation of the Turkish state would have been weakened.[80] He also noted approvingly that Kemal Pasha had built a modern state out of a feudal theocratic empire and this had been accomplished within a remarkably short time. To Bose, this was one of the marvels of modern history.[81] He considered that this had been done through the promotion of a single party, and despite the evils inherent in single party dictatorship, the experiment had done a lot of good to Turkey.[82]

Here, it may be mentioned that while Bose, was a believer in a strong party based on strict discipline, he never thought in terms of a one party system for India. In his Haripura speech, he clearly spoke of a multiparty

system. [83] Bose's biographer, Hugh Toye, states that Bose's model was the Turkish regime of Kemal Pasha and not the Nazi and fascist "caricatures."[84] This is not entirely correct because Bose did not prefer a system where a single party functioned as the centre of gravity and opposition parties were liquidated. He did not wish to adopt the Turkish model in its entirety but wanted to emulate some of its features. He however, did feel that India might require a leader like Kemal Pasha as evident from his remark that "India needs a Kemal Pasha.[85]

Bose's exposure to the political systems prevalent in different European countries helped him develop his views on political systems. His unique contribution in this respect is his concept of *samyavada.*

Development of Bose as a Political Thinker:

While Bose was exiled in Europe, he developed and articulated certain ideas. These were elaborated in an address sent to the Third Indian Political Conference, in London and thereafter in his book *The Indian Struggle,* published in 1935. The two sources from which we get a concept of his ideas need to be studied in conjunction as on was essentially an extension of the other.

In his London address, Bose declared that India would be called upon to play an important role in world history in the near future. In the seventeenth century, England had made a remarkable contribution to world civilization as a result of her progress in the direction of constitutional and democratic government. In the eighteenth century, France made a wonderful contribution to the culture of the world because of the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity, which were integral parts of the French Revolution. During the nineteenth century, Germany made remarkable gift since Marxist philosophy was first enunciated there. In the twentieth century, Russia had enriched the culture and civilization of the world through her achievements in the areas of proletarian revolution, proletarian government and proletarian culture. Bose wrote that India would be called upon make the next remarkable contribution to the culture and civilization of the world.[86] From this it follows that Bose was convinced that India had a great world mission. This view was consistently reflected in his sayings and writings both in the past as well as later. In his article, "Gorar Katha" (October 1926), Bose had said that "India has a message to give to the whole of humanity, there is something

in the culture of India which is essential to the whole humanity and if that is not accepted by mankind, world civilization will fail to reach its fulfilment." In the course of his speech at the Central Province Youth Conference at Nagpur on November 29, 1929, Bose said, "India has to attain freedom because free India will be able to make a suitable contribution to the culture and civilization of the world. The world is anxiously awaiting India's gift. Without that, the world will be all the poorer." Reiterating the same view in his Haripura address in 1938, Bose said, "We are fighting not for the cause of India alone but of humanity as well."[87] However, in his London speech, he did not dilate upon the aspect of India's world mission but concentrated on some of the essential elements, which would figure prominently in India's post-independence reconstruction.

In the first place, Bose emphasized on the necessity of preparing a plan of action for the conquest of power and also for the new state when it came into existence. If the leaders were not trained for post-war leadership, there was every possibility of a period of chaos ensuring after independence. The task of the leaders of the struggle for freedom would be to execute the programme of reform in the post-war period and create a new generation of men and women fully prepared to take complete charge of their country's affairs.[88] He did not confine his vision to the immediate objective of capturing political power but extended it to the wider aspect of nation building, which was later fully reflected, in his Haripura address. Bose's London address and his subsequent Haripura address are largely complementary with varying degrees of emphasis, and one can trace the continuity of his thought.

In the London address, two, other views of Bose are also reflected in a more concrete form, the need for a strong party and *samyavada*. Bose had, for quite some time, been thinking positively in terms of a strong party in India. Though he had earlier espoused the cause of socialism, he had not spoken categorically in terms of a strong party in India. During his period of exile in Europe, he realized the absolute urgency of a strong party for nation building. Shortly before his departure for Europe, Bose wrote in an undated letter to Satyendra Nath Majumdar that, he had resolved to recommence his work on the solid basis of *samyavada*[89] by which he meant an Indian brand of socialism. However, Bose did not explain what he meant by *samyavada* before 1935. He spoke of a socialist party in his London address which he named *Samyavadi Sangha* and gave detailed guidelines for its functioning.

The party which Bose envisaged was a party of determined men and women who would play the twin roles of fighters and leaders in the struggle against British imperialism as well as that of architects of a new India. The major task was to gather together a group of morally prepared men and women who were ready to undergo maximum sacrifice and suffering for their country and were also full time workers. They needed to be giving the requisite intellectual training for imbibing a clear conception of their task of leading India to her honoured place among the free nations of the world.[90] The character of the party would be disciplined and centralized. It would have its representatives working in varied spheres of life, like the All India Trade Union Congress, peasants organizations, women's organizations, youth organizations, the organizations of students and the depressed classes, etc. The party would have its branches all over the country for propagating its aims and ideals. It would stand for the all round freedom of the people, that is, in the social, economic and political spheres, and envisage a new state founded on the eternal principles of justice, equality and freedom.[91]

From Bose's visualization of the *Samyavadi Sangha* in India, some conclusions may be drawn. Firstly, he emphasized effective party organization because he was committed to socialism, and in his opinion, socialism could not be established except through a formal party.[92] Secondly, Bose laid great stress on the training of party workers whom he called "freedom intoxicated missionaries." Leonard Gordon is of the opinion that Bose was inspired here by the ideals of Vivekananda.[93] From Bose's own speeches and writings, it appears that he was also influenced by Lenin. In an address at the Jamalpur session of the Mymensingh District Conference on April 21, 1929, Bose said that Lenin was able to achieve success because he had a group of determined workers behind him who dedicated themselves to the task of liberating their country with death defying courage.[94] Thirdly, Bose attached great importance to the proper training of party workers because to him, the leaders of the people must function as trained experts. To them, life was a mission for which they had to prepare themselves through *tapasya* or ascetic endeavour.[95] It was also through proper training that the requisite spirit of idealism could be fostered and selfless workers created for the country's cause. Dr. Amal Mukhopadhyay draws a comparison between the Greek philosopher Plato and Bose on the ground that Plato had entrusted the task of guardianship of society to a group of persons called 'philosopher kings' who were ascetics at heart as they renounced both family life as well as worldly comforts. Bose

had in the same vain, emphasized on a life of rigorous preparation by a band of workers who were ascetics in thought and practice. Dr. R.K. Dasgupta observes that "Subhas was at once, a great statesman and a great soldier, but in both capacities, he fulfils Plato's definition of a philosopher."[96]

Finally, Bose's idea of a disciplined party was in consonance with his consistent emphasis on discipline. He did not envisage a dictatorial role for the party because to him, it was an instrument of freedom. He said in his London address that this party will work in cooperation with any other party that may be working towards the same end, in whole or in part. It will not bear enmity towards any individual or party, but at the same time, it will look upon itself as specially called upon to play its role in history.[97]

From this, it may be logically inferred that Bose did not envisage his *Samyavadi Sangha* as the only party wielding political power and forcibly liquidating other parties. However, he appears to imply that it would be the dominant focus of power in the system, fully conscious of its vital role. Bose did not specify what the attitude of the party would be toward other parties, which did not fall in line with its ideology.

Bose's Concept of *Samyavada* as Expressed in *The Indian Struggle*

In his book *The Indian Struggle*, Bose wrote that "whether one believes in the Hegelian dialectic or the Bergsonian or any other theory of evolution, in no case need we think that creation is at an end. Considering everything, one is inclined to hold that the next phase in world history will produce a synthesis between Communism and Fascism. And will it be a surprise if that synthesis is produced in India?"[98] Elucidating this point, Bose noted that communism and fascism had certain common features like supremacy of the state over the individual, denunciation of parliamentary democracy, belief in party rule, planned industrial reorganization and suppression of dissenting minorities. These common features would constitute the new synthesis which Bose called *samyavada* or the doctrine of equality and it was India's task to work out this synthesis.[99] Bose felt that communism would not succeed in India. In the first place, he pointed out that communism had no sympathy for nationalism while the Indian movement was a nationalist movement. Secondly, he felt that Russia actually had no interest in a world

revolution. Thirdly, many of the economic ideas of communism as practised in Russia would make a strong appeal to Indians but same of its other aspects would have a contrary effect because Russian communism was anti-religious and atheistic while in India there was no feeling against religion as such. Fourthly, the materialistic interpretation of history was not likely to find unqualified support in India. Fifthly, while communism had made some remarkable contributions in the domain of economics like the idea of state planning, it had made no original contribution to the solution of the "monetary problem."[100]

Finally, Bose made it clear that India would not become a new edition of Soviet Russia and the various modern socio-political movements and experimentations being conducted in Europe and America would have considerable influence on India's development.[101]

Certain conclusions follow from Bose's delineation of what he meant by *samyavada*. In the first place, Bose's emphasis was predominantly on equality. He was committed to the idea of an egalitarian society based on liberty, equality and justice but he did not accept the materialistic view of history, which was central to Marxism. This was because Bose was a firm believer in spiritual values and had been influenced by many spiritual leaders, for instance, Vivekananda. Dr. Amal Mukhopadhyay is of the opinion that the largest single factor behind Bose's rejection of the Marxian theory of class struggle and economic determinism was the influence of Vivekananda. His entire bent of mind was nurtured in the tradition of spirituality expressed in Vivekananda's works.[102] Secondly, Bose maintained a continuity in his thought by consistently professing to be a socialist without being a Marxist. He accepted some elements of communism without endorsing the fundamental communist ideology. Thus, after his meeting with Bose on January 17, 1938, Lord Zetland remarked that he was a socialist but that was a very different thing from being a communist.[103] Thirdly, a continuity in Bose's thought is also discernible in his conviction that the India of the future would not be a caricature of Soviet Russia, which he consistently proclaimed throughout his political career. He wanted India to evolve a distinctive brand of socialism. Though his theory of *samyavada* came in for serious criticism, it had an element of consistency and continuity. For a fuller understanding of this theory, the views of his critics deserve consideration.

Analysis of *Samyavada* : Critics of *Samyavada*

The critics of Bose consider his concept of *samyavada* vague, impractical, eclectic and theoretically unsound, The veteran communist activist and scholar, Sudhi Pradhan, is of the opinion that Bose was not aware of the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism and was surprisingly ignorant of the concept of dialectical materialism, the materialistic interpretation of history, and also developments like the economic crisis fed by capitalism and the emergence of fascism and Nazism.[104] He alleges that Bose sought to explore meeting points between communism and fascism at a time when Tagore and other intellectuals all over the world wrote about their fundamental differences.[105]

Another noted communist scholar, Satyendra Narayan Majumdar, has made the point that Bose was not particularly interested in the theory of social revolution or the dynamic of social change. His analysis was superficial, as he took into account only the external aspects of revolution and not its internal character and social origins.[106] He contends that because of his neglect of the theoretical side, Bose did not realize that fascism was the most aggressive phase of imperialism and through it, the symptoms of the crisis of capitalism became manifest.[107] His understanding of both communism and fascism was vague.[108]

Professor Amitava Chandra has argued in the same vein that Bose's outlook lacked clarity and its theoretical foundations were weak. He did not appreciate the fact that fascism manifested imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism in its most barbarous form. It was a theory based on binding mankind with the shackles of exploitation, while communism aimed at the emancipation of mankind from exploitation and the establishment of a better social order. Thus, Bose's effort to evolve a synthesis between communism and fascism was not practicable because the similarities, which he noted between communism and fascism, were superficial rather than real. [109] Prof. Chandra also observes that, if Bose had been able to transcend the limitations of his theoretical conception of socialism, his views on socialism would have assumed the form of a logically tenable theory.[110]

Dr. Buddhadev Bhattacharya has tried to establish that Bose was not a theorist in the strict sense of the term; he was primarily a man of action

or *Karma yogi*. His theoretical understanding of Marxism Leninism was inadequate. His analysis of fascism was correct but his criticism of communism was profoundly at fault. Unlike fascism, Marxian socialism did not subordinate the individual to the state and moreover, it was opposed to totalitarianism. It envisaged the complete democratization of society. Further, it did not advocate one party rule. It was also not correct to say that Marxist philosophy assigned importance to the economic factor alone. In addition, while the Marxist outlook was atheistic, atheism was not set forth in their programme and proletarians who believed in old religious prejudices were not prohibited from joining the Communist Party. The allegation that communism signified the deprecation of national sentiment was not correct and neither was the charge that Russia had lost interest in world revolution.[111]

Bose's biographer, Mihir Bose, has expressed the view that Bose's absurd theory of synthesis between communism and fascism was the product of his eclecticism.[112] The noted communist scholar and former Parliamentarian, Professor Hiren Mukherjee, too, feels that Bose's envisaged synthesis of communism and fascism was an example of eclecticism that was sociologically impermissible.[113]

From this summary of the criticisms levelled against Bose, three essential objections can be noted. Firstly, Bose was not well read in Marxist literature. Secondly, he did not truly understand the reactionary nature of fascism. Finally, because of his eclecticism, Bose lacked clarity of vision and theoretical soundness. At the other end of the spectrum, there are viewpoints advanced in support of Bose's idea of *samyavada*.

Arguments in Favour of *Samyavada*

The scholars and academicians who endorse Bose's concept of *samyavada* do not approach the question from the Marxist angle. They advance the view that Bose envisaged his concept of socialism in consonance with India's tradition, history and cultural civilizational heritage. Professor Samar Guha, a former Parliamentarian and scholar is of the opinion that Bose deliberately rejected Marxism because he assigned top priority to establishing socialism on the foundation of a philosophy of creative evolution of life nurtured in Indian soil.[114] To him, Bose was a pathfinder of Indian socialism, who sought to counter the widely held belief that Marxism Leninism was the only source of socialist thought.[115] The idea of a synthesis was central

to Indian civilization, where diverse streams of life had been assimilated over the ages and variegated cultures had been integrated resulting in a spirit of universalism, at the same time, India's distinctive civilizational identity had been preserved.[116] According to Prof. Guha, Bose realized that no ideology could be the last word in human society and any mechanical application of any particular theory or ideology was bound to be fallacious. While Bose rejected communism as the supreme ideology, he was not averse to imbibing some of its positive features. This was not opportunistic because Bose was clear in his mind about the urgency of eradication of socio-economic inequalities and discriminations.[117] Bose's theory of *samyavada* reflected the depth of his outlook and vindicated the spirit of catholicity in India's culture and civilization.

Bose's nephew, Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose, believes that Bose's idea of synthesis was a visualization of a new system. Just as India's freedom struggle was inspired by the freedom struggle of various countries, similarly only imbibing the lessons of historical experiments in the past and also contemporary experiences could perform India's task of building a new society. An ideal society would be a synthesis of all these. The synthesis of India's heritage and the modern progressive socio-economic systems was represented best in Bose. Dr. Jasobanta Kar argues in the same vein that Bose's concept of *samyavada* was an entirely original concept and stood for a synthesis of knowledge and experience of the good elements of the different systems of the world. This concept of socialism was a new feature in the history of Indian political thought.[118] Dr. Bose, here, implies that Bose's concept of *samyavada* was his original contribution to the culture and civilization of the world.

Pradip Bose, another nephew of Bose, counters the Marxist allegation that Bose's approach to socialism was eclectic with the logic that Bose's eclecticism enabled him to develop an openness of attitude, which finds its counterpart in the theory of critical rationalism of Karl Popper.[119] When applied to politics, it means the readiness to listen to critical arguments and learn from experience. This was the approach of Bose who became a forerunner of socialist thought. His eclecticism was the index of his pragmatism.[120] Pradip Bose argues that one of the main reasons behind the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union in 1991, was the adherence of the communists to a rigid uniformity of approach.[121] The obvious implication of Pradip Bose's viewpoint is that Bose's eclecticism was actually an index

of his intellectual pragmatism which conveyed the message that all ideologies need to be examined and re-examined in the context of concrete contemporary reality.

Amalendu Ghosh, a late activist of the Sri Sangha group, sought to demolish the myth that Marxism is the last word in human life and noted that, Bose did not recognize Marxism as the eternal truth because in his view, Marxism was not synonymous with progress.[122] Ghosh suggested that any uni-dimensional theory based on the determinism of any single factor was anathema to Bose because it acted as an obstacle to the liberation of man and to endorse such a theory meant the denial of man's creative potential. Thus, Bose's idea of *samyavada* was also not a finite concept but developed through a constant process of evolution.[123] Ghosh contended that Bose's concept of *samyavada* was a multidimensional alternative to the uni-dimensional Marxism. The latter, while professing to be a catalyst of freedom and progress, ultimately turned out to be an enemy of the concept. Bose's *samyavada*, on the other hand was the surest guarantee of freedom and progress in a changing world.[124]

Finally, the noted scholar and intellectual, Dr. R.K.Dasgupta, has described Bose as a prophet of the collapse of communism in Soviet Russia and East Europe. According to him, Bose was a true socialist who seized the basic principle of socialism and thought of making it the soul of Indian *samyavada.*[125] He says that, the British Socialist Union took heed from the warning of the noted, socialist intellectual, Kerr Hardie, in the *Labour Leader* in 1904, that, a great principle might be so overlaid with dogmatic interpretations, as to be unrecognizable. It, thus, advocated non-conformism to dogmatism. Bose was a nonconformist and also a visionary of the future and the kind of socialism he contemplated was the key to the achievement of socialism in its true spirit.[126] The focus here is on the relevance of Bose's concept of *samyavada* in the context of the fall of communism in the Soviet Union and the countries of East Europe due to adherence to rigid ideologies.

Samyavada in Critical Perspective

Objectively speaking, there is some truth in both viewpoints on Bose's concept of *samyavada.* The Marxist criticism that Bose's theoretical understanding of Marxism-Leninism was inadequate is substantially correct especially because communism does honour national sentiment. Marx and

Engels were fervent supporters of the Irish movement.[127] They also supported the demands of the Slavs in the Balkans fighting against the Turkish Empire. Furthermore, in a meeting in 1875, held to commemorate the Polish uprising of 1813, Marx expressed solidarity with the Polish rebels.[128]

Secondly, Apart from his book *The Indian Struggle,* Bose, had stated in a speech delivered at the Tokyo University in October-November, 1944, that "We fully appreciate the importance of the economic factor which was formerly ignored, but it is not necessary to overemphasize it." Bose's view that Marxism over emphasized the economic aspect[129] is, not correct. This is evident from Engel's letter to J. Bloch on September 21, 1890, saying that while the economic factor was the ultimate determining elements in history, the various components of the superstructure like the political, juristic, philosophical theories and religious factors also exercise influence on the course of historical struggle and in many cases are the determining factors.[130] Engels also wrote to H. Starkenburg on June 25, 1894, that, "It is not that the economic position is alone active, while everything has a passive effect. There is rather interaction on the basis of economic necessity which ultimately asserts itself."[131] From this it follows that Bose was not correct in expressing the view that Marxism assigned importance to the economic factor, which overshadowed other factors.

Bose's opinions that communism in Russia was anti religious and atheistic was not entirely correct. Atheism was a part of the communist programme but it did not entail offending the religious sentiments of believers. The Draft Programme of the Communist Party, in March 1919, clearly stated that in organizing the broadest anti-religious propaganda and the dissemination of scientific knowledge, care must be taken not to offend the feelings of believers.[132] Stalin, however, followed a different course and during his time, religious persecution and anti-religious propaganda intensified.[133] Bose evidently had the policy of repression of the church and believers by Stalin in mind, but did not take note of the entirely different views held by Marx, Engels or Lenin on religion.[134] Paradoxically, there was an element of similarity between Bose and Lenin because like Lenin, who had stated specifically that, "The revolutionary proletariat will succeed in making religion a purely private affair so far as the state is concerned.[135] Bose too wanted to make religion an entirely private affair." Abid Hasan Safrani, Bose's close associate in the INA, testifies that to Bose, religion was a completely personal affair.[136]

While Bose's view of Marxism was deficient in many respects, the Marxist criticism that he was inconsistent, vague and eclectic does not appear to be justified on the basis of the available source material. Bose was admittedly eclectic in his approach but it did not signify lack of clarity in his thought. It must however, be noted that Bose's use of expressions and choice of words often created confusion in the minds of others though he himself was clear in his mind. The critics of Bose focus on his eclecticism because Bose proposed a synthesis of communism and fascism, which they consider impossible in practice. Professor Hiren Mukherjee is of the opinion that eclecticism has the advantage of inculcating a spirit of tolerance, but tolerance often leads to tolerance of evil. Thus, it must be tempered by a spirit of positivism, which means that after a certain point, a fixed stand has to be taken.[137] Judged from this angle, Bose appears to have retained an element of fixity and positivism even in his eclecticism because he did not at any time, deviate from his commitment to socialism and his vision of a happy, prosperous and egalitarian society. Pradip Bose makes a case for eclecticism saying that Bose was a full blooded socialist who wanted to assimilate positive elements from all the systems of the world, adapting the relevant features to the Indian situation. His political philosophy was flexible in its application to the solution of problems. Today, after the collapse of communism in East Europe, the inefficacy of a rigid thought system has become apparent. What is needed is the acceptance of complexity in a complex world and a widening of vision. Dr. Sobhanlal Mukherjee argues that Bose was not eclectic in the pejorative sense implying, borrowing from different fields. He attained a high intellectual level of detachment and dispassionateness of a philosopher, which imparted a positive dimension to his eclecticism. The Late Amalendu Ghosh remarks in the same vein that in the present world, China has produced the kind of synthesis Bose wanted. He feels that today communism in its pure form is in evidence only in Cuba. All countries are making systemic adjustments in a changing world. Prof. Surya Banerjee is of the opinion that eclecticism is generally harmless if it is confined to the intellectual level, but when applied to the practical field in its crude form implying borrowing at random from various disciplines, it can prove disastrous as it may cause one to deviate from his fixed goal. Bose appears to have avoided the negative side of eclecticism because he never deviated from his central point by making opportunistic compromises.[138]

It is also not correct to say that while envisaging a synthesis of

communism and fascism, Bose was unaware of the menace of fascism. Bose was consistent in his denunciation of the imperialist ventures of Nazi Germany as mentioned earlier. Professor Prasanta Kumar Ghosh categorically states that Bose took the disciplined organization of the Nazi and fascist systems into account but later came to realize that this organization was built at the heavy cost of transforming the people into a aggressors through a policy of aggrandizement as the real face of fascism was revealed to him in the course of time.[139] In an interview to R.P. Dutt in London on January 24, 1938, Bose confessed that, his expression "synthesis of Communism and Fascism" was not a happy one, and at the time that he had written his book *The Indian Struggle,* fascism had not yet started on its imperialist expedition.[140] He clarified that what he had meant was that after winning freedom, India would move in the direction of socialism.[141] It may be observed here that Bose's interview to R.P.Dutt did not signify any substantial revision of his original views but rather a reaffirmation of the commitment to socialism that he had expressed in *The Indian Struggle*. Bose's consistent adherence to socialism was manifested in his address at the Tokyo University, where he clearly stated that problems like national defence, poverty eradication and education could not be left to private initiative. In his opinion, "Public opinion in India is in favour of some sort of socialist system in which the initiative will be left to private individuals, but the state will take over the responsibility for solving economic problems."[142] It was not, therefore, a case of retracting his earlier position but only a clarification of some unclear expressions. An analysis of Bose's concept of *samyavada* reveals an uninterrupted continuity of thought rather than a self-contradiction.

Bose was, however, not able to overcome an important limitation and that was, using confusing expressions. In his Tokyo speech, he spoke of a synthesis of National Socialism (obviously meaning Nazism) and communism.[143] This again created the impression that he was inclined towards Nazi Germany. Prof. Sankari Prasad Basu is of the opinion that Bose should have spoken in terms of a synthesis of nationalism and communism instead of National Socialism and communism. In the same speech he had stated that, "It will be a synthesis of nationalism and socialism. This is something which has not been achieved by the National Socialists in Germany today." This was the most perfect representation of Bose's thought and the other reference to National Socialism was totally uncalled for.[144] A careful reading of his Tokyo speech reveals that he did not envisage a totalitarian state in

India modelled on Nazi Germany. He clearly stated that he wanted a state which would be of an authoritarian character but which would act as the servant of the masses.[145] In *The Indian Struggle*, Bose had spoken of a strong central government with dictatorial power for some years to come.[146] Bose never thought of a perpetual dictatorship like those prevailing at the time in Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, and what is more important, conceived of the state as the servant o the people, an idea totally alien to Nazism and fascism. Dr. G.L.Adhya goes to the extent of saying that discipline was ingrained in Bose long before his exposure to Hitler and Mussolini. He might have developed an admiration for the efficient administration of discipline by Hitler and Mussolini but never endorsed their racist ideology.[147]

Secondly, the noted scholar, Suniti Kumar Ghosh, is of the opinion that Bose was "unable to appreciate the class character of Fascism."[148] He points out that, Bose did not realize that in Italy and Germany, it was the big capitalists who installed Mussolini and Hitler in power.[149] Bose's Tokyo speech, however, creates the impression that he was not oblivious of the class character of Nazism. This is evident from his observation that National Socialism in Germany had not been able to radically reform the prevailing economic system built upon a capitalistic basis.[150]

Bose's idea of *samyavada* despite its ambiguities and confusions had some positive features. The first important message which Bose wanted to convey, was that no system was either an unmixed evil or totally perfect. Each had its merits and demerits and it was the task of a country aiming at progress, to imbibe the merits by obviating the demerits. Bose did not, therefore, envisage systemic synthesis in absolute terms. He thought of a synthesis of some of the features of diverse systems that would be beneficial to India. In his concept of *samyavada*, there was scope for the accommodation of diverse elements without making any compromise on the fundamental issue of socialism. Pradip Bose argues that Bose was not a socialist of the doctrinaire and abstract variety. His approach was pragmatic and result oriented. He was deeply interested in how other nations were seeking solutions to their problems and what could be learnt from their experiences. That is why, he took interest in both communism and fascism and consequently, what could be adapted to India with its own history and geography, its cultural heritage and political environment.[151]

In the second place, Bose made the valid point that a uniform, rigid and mechanical application of any ideology is untenable in the present world.

The current trends in world development appear to vindicate Bose because after the collapse of communism in East Europe, no country is found adhering rigidly to communism and the concept of market economy has made not only inroads into many erstwhile communist countries but even into formally communist ones. Globalization and liberalization have necessitated a flexible rather than a rigid approach. His conception of *samyavada* needs to be reassessed in the context of the fall of communism in Russia and East Europe. Bose was possibly influenced by his mentor, C.R. Das, who remarked prophetically at the Gaya Congress of 1922, that he expected a counter-revolution in Russia where Marxist doctrines and dogmas were being forced on the unwilling genius of Russia.[152] Bose did not make any similar comment on the fall of communism in Russia but he did not approve of the system of regimentation, which was in evidence in Russia. Tagore during his visit to Russia, admired much of what he saw there, but also remarked in a critical and prophetic vein that, "certain attitudes were being cultivated which encouraged hatred, antagonism and revengefulness against your own ideal and destroy it."[153] Bose constantly emphasized the human element in socialism because his brand of socialism was based on the recognition of human values and a healthy respect for human freedom. Pradip Bose describes Bose as fundamentally a nationalist and a humanist. In the opinion of Dr. S.C.Maikap, "Socialism, communism, democracy, dictatorship and the like, are social orders in different altitudes and attitudes in the progress of civilization. Bose was free from the bondage of any 'ism' but ever progressive in his views on universal welfare"[154]. The distinctive quality of Bose's concept of socialism was the spirit of humanism, which animated it. From Bose's own account of his meeting with the noted humanist philosopher, Romain Rolland, in Switzerland on April 5, 1955, it is known that he was very impressed by Rolland's emphasis on a just and humane social order based on equal rights for all races, justice for the exploited workers, freedom for suppressed nationalities and equal rights for men and women.[155] While Rolland was not a freedom fighter like Bose, he discovered a meeting of minds with him as Rolland was firmly committed to the ideal and egalitarian social order.

From the above analysis it follows that Bose's concept of socialism was in tune with his general bent of mind and orientation. He occasionally revised his views and retained an element of self-criticism as exemplified by his interview to R.P. Dutt, but the basic postulates of his theory of socialism

remained intact. Thus, Bose's concept of *samyavada* is an index of the continuity rather than any contradiction in the thought of Bose. Apart from ideological questions, Bose also devoted attention to the political strategies and tactics of the national struggle against British imperialism. This deserves separate analysis.

Bose's View on the Strategies and Tactics of Struggle

While Bose was in Europe, Gandhi withdrew the Civil disobedience movement in 1933. Bose was bitterly critical of Gandhi for this as he considered it, an act of surrender at a crucial juncture.[156] In the address sent to the aforesaid Third Political Conference in London, Bose analysed the appropriate strategies of struggle against British imperialism. He suggested that there were two feasible alternative modes of struggle that is economic blockade and capture of power by arms. Of these, the first had not proved successful (in the context of boycott, non-co operation and civil disobedience) because the revenue collection machinery of the government and also the lines of communication had remained unimpaired. The adoption of the second alternative was out of the question since the Congress was pledged to non-violence.[157] Bose advocated a four-fold strategy for paralyzing the government through the prevention of tax and revenue collection, the prevention of financial and military help to the government in times of distress, winning over the sympathy of the strongholds of British imperialism like the army, police and civil servants and finally, seizure of power by the force of arms.[158]

In this context, it should be mentioned that thought Bose did not think in terms of an immediate armed struggle, he was convinced of its inevitability, even while he was in India. His conviction was strengthened during his exile in Europe as evident from an interview at Budapest on May 9, 1934, where he said that all methods for getting rid of the English were justified, even revolution and violence.[159] He reiterated this in an interview in Bucharest on May 15, 1934, where he also described himself as belonging to the extremist section of Indian nationalists.[160] It is further known from Romain Rolland's account of Bose's meeting with him that Bose had tried to convince him that non-violence had failed once and for all.[161] It is clear from this that the idea of armed struggle had begun to assume some kind of coherent shape

in Bose's mind. This may be attributed to his interaction with leaders of international eminence like De Valera. Further, Bose's critical and intensive study of revolutionary movements in Europe demonstrated to him that powerful imperialism could be dismantled only through the application of force.

The Transformation of Bose

Bose's sojourn in Europe was a watershed in his intellectual and political evolution, as well as a catalyst of transformation of his outlook on life. He attained ideological clarity and intellectual maturity along with a vision of India of the future. At the same time, he shed many of his earlier inhibitions, which had been firmly entrenched in his mind as the inevitable product of the inherent conservatism of the Indian society. Though Bose did rebel against societal injustices, he could not entirely emancipate himself from the trammels of social norms, customs and rituals. In Europe, he encountered an entirely different society and responded positively to the challenge of adapting himself to the imperatives of the new social milieu. He did not accept all the features of European society, but sought to acclimatize himself with the new social environment. Thus he returned to India, a changed man. Though Bose did not negate his fundamental self, he incorporated selectively, the positive features of the western society within his indigenous framework, which became particularly manifest in the INA phase. Without contesting the native roots of Bose, it may be said that his success in the last phase of his career was largely attributable to the change he underwent in Europe, which was in many respects, a revolutionary change. Europe too had its own contribution to make in the making of India's warrior-philosopher.

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Chapter – VI

THE HELMSMAN INSTALLED AND OVERTHROWN 1938-39

The years 1938 and 1939 represented the high watermark in the political life of Subhas Chandra Bose. He rose to the elevated pedestal of Congress President and was reelected for a second term in the face of stringent opposition from the Gandhian group. With his rift with the Right Wing widening into an unbridgeable gulf, Bose was forced to resign as President. However the two years symbolised the most important defining moments of his political life in India.

Bose's Election as Congress President

Bose returned to India in April 1936 and was immediately put under arrest. He was set free in March 1937. In 1938, Gandhi proposed his name as Congress President at Haripura. Amales Tripathi is of the opinion that Gandhi did this to neutralize the growing strength of the left wing.[1] Hugh Toye, Bose's biographer, suggests that Gandhi was impressed by the national stature of Bose whose reputation in some places rivaled that of Gandhi himself.[2]

Tripathi's explanation appears logical because Gandhi had successfully used this same tactic earlier. He had made Nehru, who was one of the main spokesman of the left, the President of the Congress at Lahore in 1929 and thereafter, at Lucknow in 1936 and Faizpur in 1937 at a time when the left wing had become important and shown signs of restiveness. By appearing conciliatory on the one hand and using the strength of the right wing on the other, Gandhi had successfully countered the left challenge earlier. He calculated in 1938 that despite his own position as the undisputed mass leader of the national struggle, he could not afford to be complacent about the leftists in the Congress. Moreover, as Prof. Sankari Prasad Basu has opined, Gandhi realized the need to carry with him the province of Bengal by electing a Bengali as Congress President. Leonard Gordon corroborates

this view saying that Gandhi wanted to assuage regional grievances. It was intelligent politics to have a Bengali President in the Congress who would be the first since C.R. Das had resigned in 1923. Moreover, some nationalists had been harbouring hard feeling against the Congress leadership for no Bengalis had been selected in the Congress working committee in 1935.[3] Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence had not gained as much acceptance in Bengal as it had in some other provinces. By making Bose president, Gandhi may have tried to win over Bengal.

A different reason has been cited by Bose's nephew, Subrata Bose, according to whom, Gandhi wanted to give Bose another chance to identify himself with the Gandhian line of action.[4] Another nephew, Pradip Bose, suggests that Gandhi expected Bose to move close to him out of gratitude by bestowing on him the honour of Congress President. Gandhi would thus have been able to implement his own ideas.[5] However, there is no evidence to prove that Bose had any ambition to become Congress President. Thus, Bose was unlikely to compromise his principles and convictions out of gratitude to Gandhi. Secondly, Gandhi was aware of Bose's consistently critical attitude towards him and it is unlikely that he expected to win Bose over by offering him the honour of becoming the Congress President. It may be surmised that Gandhi proposed Bose's name as President as an experimental move with the expectation that it would temporarily exercise a sobering effect on him. Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose says that it is highly unlikely that Gandhi expected to tame Bose just as he had won over Nehru. He did not consider Bose reliable and yet considered him the best candidate under the circumstances, and thus took a calculated risk. This view is corroborated by Gandhi's letter to Patel on November 1, 1937, saying "I have observed that Subhas is not at all dependable. However, there is nobody but he who can be the next President."[6]

One significant factor, which influenced Gandhi's choice of Bose, was his widening gulf with Nehru in this period. The states' people's movement in Mysore on the issue of civil liberties had gained momentum.[7] A resolution was passed by the Congress in October 1937 in protest against the policy of repression by the state government of Mysore and its suppression of civil liberties.[8] Gandhi opposed this resolution and was dissatisfied with Nehru for his inability to prevent it. From the beginning, Gandhi did not want the Congress to be involved in the state's people's movement and if Congressmen did become embroiled in it, it should be in their individual

capacity. Nehru's views on the subject were not the same as Gandhi's.[9] From the available source material, it appears that during this period, a breach occurred in Gandhi-Nehru relations.[10] He, thus, considered Bose a better choice than Nehru, as Congress President.

Prof. Suniti Kumar Ghosh suggests that Gandhi wanted to use Bose to ensure acceptance of the federal scheme by making operative the provincial part of the Government of India Act of 1935.[11] If Bose became the President, he would be able to blunt the edge of the opposition of the radical forces to the federal scheme.[12] This view will be discussed later, but it may be concluded for the time being that Gandhi's choice of Bose was actuated by purely political motives. It did not signify any personal rapport between the two as neither was converted to the other's view.

Bose's Performance as Congress President

The performance of Bose as Congress President may be analyzed at two different levels, namely, thought and action. His Presidential address at Haripura, contained the most comprehensive enunciation of his thoughts on the objectives and strategies of the national movement and also the blueprint of his ideas or a future independent India. To assess Bose's thoughts and ideas, it is necessary to critically evaluate his Haripura speech.

The Haripura Address

Objectives and Strategies of the National Movement

Bose's Haripura address was farsighted and thoughtful and came "as a pleasant surprise to those who considered him as only a firebrand and an agitator. It revealed the maturity of a statesman and the vision of a thinker."[13] Bose stated clearly at the outset "The ultimate stage in our progress will be the severance of the British connection. When that severance takes place and there is no trace left of British domination, we shall be in a position to determine our future relations with Great Britain through a treaty of alliance voluntarily agreed to by both the parties."[14] This reflects a continuity in his thought, as ever since his early days in Cambridge, Bose had been categorical in his insistence on complete independence.[15]

Regarding the method of national struggle, Bose emphasized on non-

violent *Satyagraha*. However, he added that *satyagraha* did not merely mean passive resistance but also active resistance.[16] Here again a continuity in his thought is discernible as in his book *The Indian Struggle*, Bose had argued that passive resistance would have to be transformed into active resistance and in the last stage, there would be armed revolution.[17] Bose did not mention armed struggle in his presidential speech because he was under an obligation to abide by the official Congress policy of nonviolence. The continuity in Bose's thought was also manifested in his emphasis on a disciplined volunteer corps in emulation of the summer schools of Britain through which political parties imparted training to political workers.[18] This signified a reaffirmation of Bose's consistent stress on the volunteers' movement.[19] He also reiterated his earlier emphasis on the need for mobilization of the workers and peasants' organizations and recommended for them a collective affiliation to the Congress in emulation of the Soviet Union where the United Front of the Soviets of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers figured prominently in the October Revolution of 1917.[20] Bose's logic was that the Congress should work in conjunction with all anti-imperialist organizations and forge a combined front which would include all progressive and radical forces.

In the field of foreign policy, Bose was categorical on the point that "We should not be influenced by the internal politics of any country or the form of its state. We shall find in every country, men and women who will sympathise with India's freedom, no matter what their own political views may be. In this matter, we should take a leaf out of Soviet diplomacy. Though Soviet Russia is a Communist state, her diplomats have not hesitated to make alliances with non socialist states and have not declined sympathy or support coming from any quarter."[21] Ever since his exile in Europe, Bose had become convinced that in a dynamic and volatile international scenario, dogmatic insistence on a particular ideology would be prejudicial to national interest. Foreign policy had to make suitable adjustments in response to situational exigencies. Bose became increasingly vocal on this point as exemplified in a letter to Nehru on March 26, 1939, saying, "Foreign policy is a realistic affair to be determined largely from the point of view of a nation's self interest. Take Soviet Russia for instance. With all her Communism in her internal politics, she never allows sentiment to dominate her foreign policy. That is why, she did not hesitate to enter into a pact with French imperialism when it suited her purpose. The Franco-Soviet Pact and the Czechoslovak-Soviet

Pact are instances in point. Even today, Soviet Russia is anxious to enter into a pact with British imperialism."[22] It is also noteworthy that on January 25, 1938, Rashbihari Bose, the famous Indian revolutionary exiled at Japan, had written to Bose "the International situation should be studied and utilized for India's benefit and interests. We should make friends with Britain's enemies. Sentiments should find no place in actual politics. Interest is always the basis."[23] This letter did not reach Bose but he unconsciously expressed the thoughts of Rashbihari Bose in almost identical language both in his Haripura speech and elsewhere. The thoughts on foreign policy expressed by Bose at Haripura, partially explain his subsequent decision to escape from India and collude with the Axis powers like Nazi Germany and Japan for the purpose of liberating India from outside.

Bose reaffirmed vigorously, his emphasis on foreign propaganda as an instrument of Congress policy. He had been most vocal on the necessity of propaganda among the masses as far back as 1921,[24] but it was during his exile in Europe that he began to espouse the cause of propaganda at the international level. In his Haripura speech he laid great stress on an extensive international propaganda network.[25]

So far as administration and British policy was concerned, Bose stated his opposition to the federal scheme, which the British wished to impose through the Government of India Act of 1935. Bose noted that India would be deprived of any power over defence and foreign policy and the commercial safeguard meant the negation of popular control over a major part of the expenditure. Moreover, since external affairs was a reserved subject, the freedom of the Indian legislature to conclude treaty agreements, was bound to be curtailed. Further, in the face of the power of the veto granted to the Governor General, no proposal for the promotion of national industries could be implemented.[26] Bose's opposition to the federal scheme was based on both political and economic considerations as evident from his remark that "It is of course preposterous to permit foreigners in this country to compete with the nationals on equal terms and there can be no genuine *swaraj* if India is to be denied the power to devise a national economic policy including the right, if her interests so require, of differentiating between 'nationals' and 'non-nationals'.[27] Bose also spoke of an active policy for India in the field of foreign trade and said that India's export trade made it essential that she should not have any restrictive agreement with England which would jeopardise her trade with other countries and reduce her bargaining power.[28]

He noted that any trade agreement between England and India was bound to be of an unequal character because India's political relationship with England would weigh the scales heavily in the latter's favour.[29] From this it is clear that political and economic questions were inextricably intertwined in Bose's thought. The most significant part of the Haripura speech refers to Bose's vision of the India of the future. He had earlier sporadically expressed his thoughts on India's socio economic problems but at Haripura, this was presented for the first time in an articulate form.

Blueprint for the Future

Bose's Haripura address throws considerable light on his views on the path that India should follow in the future. This is significant because many contemporary and later critics have accused Bose of totalitarian ideas.[30] However, without an understanding of his visualization of future India, no final verdict can be given on this question. In his speech, Bose amplified his idea of a disciplined party in India, which had been mentioned in his book *The Indian Struggle* and also in his speech sent to be read at the London Political Conference. He ruled out any possibility of the Congress withering away after independence and said that it should take up the programme of socio-economic reconstruction of India in the post-independence period. Citing the example of European countries, he said "Only in those countries has there been orderly and continuous progress where the party which has seized power, undertook the work of reconstruction."[31] In order to dispel all misapprehensions that he envisaged a monolithic party modelled on the Nazi Party of Germany or the Fascist Party of Italy, Bose made it clear that in free India, there would be a multiparty system, and other parties would coexist with the Congress, which would be the dominant party. He categorically stated that the Congress would not be based on the "leader principle" of the Nazi Party and its foundations would be democratic. Leaders would be elected and not thrust upon the people from above.[32]

So far as the type of government that post independence India, was to have, Bose spoke, on the one hand, of a federal republic where the princely states would be the willing partners of the centre,[33] but at the same time he conceived of a federal state with a strong central government, which would be necessary to India against foreign invasions.[34] He appears to have developed an apprehension of India encountering foreign invasions after

independence. He restated this point an article, "Free India and Her Problems", published in the German periodical, *While and Macht*, published in August 1942, after his escape from India. Here he stated, "There will be a strong central Government. When the new regime is stabilized and the state machinery begins to function smoothly, power will be decentralized and the provincial governments will be given more responsibility."[35] Therefore, it follows that although he emphasised the need for strong central government in the initial phase, Bose was not in favour of a unitary state in India. Dr Sisir Kumar Bose is of the opinion that Bose's ideas are often misunderstood. He did not want a strong central government at the expense of marginalizing the component states. He was consistent in his advocacy of autonomy for the states and always kept in mind, the vast diversities of India.[36] The Haripura speech corroborates this view. Here, Bose clearly emphasized the rich diversity of Indian life and gave assurances on the complete protection of minority rights.

Bose also believed in the protection of fundamental rights like the right to freedom of speech and expression, the right of free association, right to assemble peacefully without arms, the right to equality, the right to freedom of religion, etc.[37] Two conclusions follow from this. Firstly, Bose's emphasis on the rights of the people proves that he did not think in terms of a totalitarian state where very often, popular liberties and aspirations are not recognized. Secondly, it reveals a continuity in his ideas because along with his consistent emphasis on a federal republic in independent India, Bose had also been an eloquent champion of fundamental rights. In his speech at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference at Poona on May 3, 1928, Bose was categorical on the point that a constitution without a declaration of rights, was not worth the name.[38] His basic orientation was thus democratic.

Another point made in his speech which reveals a continuity in Bose's thought. was the reaffirmation of his commitment to socialism. Bose expressed the view that problems like poverty, illiteracy, production and distribution could be effectively tackled along socialistic lines.[39] He spoke of a radical reform of the land system through abolition of landlordism, liquidation of debt, and provision of cheap credit for the rural population.[40] He also recommended the extension of the cooperative movement and a scientific reorganization of agriculture.[41] This was completely in consonance with Bose's earlier stand on agricultural problems. In the manifesto of the Independence of India League drafted by Bose on October 2, 1928, liquidation

of agricultural indebtedness was envisaged through state interference. Bose had written to Gopabandhu Das on April 7, 1926 "Agricultural development will be possible only if work is started on the cooperative basis."[42]

The most novel of Bose's ideas expressed in the Haripura address was his conception of national planning. He introduced for the first time, his idea of a National Planning Committee whose task would be to provide a comprehensive scheme for gradually '*socializing*' the entire agricultural and industrial sectors.[43] Bose felt that agricultural development had to be supplemented by industrial development under state ownership and state control.[44]

While Bose was categorical on the point that it was impossible to revert to the pre-industrial days,[45] he did not minimize the importance of cottage industries. He recommended the revival of cottage industries wherever they were able to survive the competition of factories and stated that in India, there would be plenty of room for cottage industries, particularly the hand spinning and hand weaving industries.[46] This indicates that while Bose had a basic faith in modern industry, he did not entirely reject the traditions of the past. Moreover his views on cottage industry may have been included to convince Gandhi that his scheme, based predominantly on heavy industries, did not intend to undermine Gandhi's insistence on cottage industries.

Amales Tripathi observes that Bose's earlier formulation of a synthesis of communism and fascism in his book *The Indian Struggle* was replaced by a complete commitment to socialism in his Haripura address.[47] However, it should be noted that Bose had always been a consistent advocate of socialism and even when he spoke of a synthesis between communism and fascism, his basic commitment to socialism had never been shaken. He frankly stated during his interview to R.P. Dutt in London on January 24, 1938, that when he spoke of a synthesis of communism and fascism, he meant that after winning freedom, India would move in the direction of socialism.[48] The view of Hugh Toye that at Haripura, Bose toned down the urgency of socialism,[49] also appears incorrect because his emphasis was entirely on socialism.

Bose also devoted attention to the problem of national unity and prescribed specific remedies for the colonial problem. Firstly, he recommended the Roman script, which had been introduced by Kemal Pasha in Turkey.[50] He believed that this would help to foster a common spirit in India. Bose also emphasized on the role of the modern media like radio, films, etc., in

creating national unity.[51] It may be inferred that Bose conceived their role as catalysts of national integration through the dissemination of secular values as a counterforce against the tendencies of communalism and separatism. Though Bose did not explicitly say so in his Haripura address, he remarked in the article in *While and Macht*, mentioned earlier, that "The state will have to do everything possible to unify the whole nation and the press, radio, cinema, theatre etc. will have to be utilized for this purpose.... Special emphasis will have to be laid on the proper education of boys and girls and of students in the universities, so that they may imbibe the spirit of national unity at an early age."[52] Thus, Bose possibly, viewed the media as a unifying force when he spoke of it in his Haripura address.

Bose was in favour of a secular state, which would observe neutrality in regard to all religions.[53] Dr. Amalendu De, Vice President of the Asiatic Society, is of the opinion that Bose's insistence on socialism was related to his effort to combat communalism. He realized that a socialist system would help to liberate all persons from social, economic and political bondage. Communal animosity could be eliminated by emphasizing on the basis of common interest of different communities and this was possible only in a socialist system.[54] This appears to be correct because Bose was a believer in the ability of socialist systems to bring about national unity. This is also evident from his speech at the Tokyo University in 1944, where he remarked that if in spite of its heterogeneous composition, the Soviet Union could unite different religious group under one political system, there was no reason why India could not be united.[55]

It is interesting to note Bose's view in the Haripura speech that "An internal partition is necessary to neutralize the transference of power. If the new constitution is finally rejected, I have no doubt that British ingenuity will seek some other constitutional device for partitioning India."[56] This prophecy proved correct because the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan in 1940 was conceded and the country was partitioned in 1947. Bose appears to have become convinced that the British policy of divide and rule was bound to be injurious to India's unity. One of the reasons behind his opposition to the federal scheme of 1935 was that it contained the seeds of communal conflict. He remarked in a private conversation that so long as the British remained in India, communalism would also remain.[57]

Considered as a whole, Bose's Haripura address was perceptive and insightful. It reflected a continuity in his thought and also projected him as

a leader with a vision of the future, who despite assigning priority to political freedom, also gave due emphasis to India's long-term problems. The extent to which he ensured the implementation of his ideas needs to be discussed in this context along with his widening rift with the right wing.

Bose's Ideas and Rift with the Right Wing

Bose zealously undertook follow-up action with respect to the idea of national planning which was his distinctive contribution as Congress President. Though the idea of planning had impressed Congress leaders like Nehru, Bose was the first Congress President to make it a part of the official Congress programme and propagate its cause from the platform of the Congress. At the third general meeting of the Indian Science New Association on August 21, 1938, Bose made the point that "No industrial advancement is possible unless we pass through the throes of an industrial revolution."[58] For this purpose, Bose declared his resolve to appoint a National Planning Commission for the whole country and also convene a Conference of Industries Ministers of the seven provinces where the Congress held office.[59] He enunciated the following aspects, objectives and principles of planning:

1) A national economy,
2) A policy for the development of industries like power supply, machine and tools manufacture, transport and communication industries, etc.,
3) The facilitation of technical education and research by sending students abroad in emulation of Japan.
4) The creation of a permanent National Research Council,
5) Conducting on economic survey of the present industrial position for furnishing the Planning Commission with the necessary data.[60]

At the Industries Ministers' Conference in Delhi on October 2, 1938, Bose made some additional and supplementary recommendations like a proper economic survey of each province, coordination between cottage and small-scale industries, regional distribution of industries and appointment of a committee of experts to give further advice on problems of industrialization.[61] Under Bose's presidentship, the All Indian National Planning Committee was inaugurated at Bombay on December 17, 1938. In his inaugural speech, Bose said that the committee would have to devote attention to the power industry, heavy industries, chemical industries, and communications industries like

railway, telegraph, telephone and radio. It would also have to tackle the problem of finding the necessary capital and credit for the implementation of the plan of industrialization. Pattabhi Sitaramayya describes Bose's inaugural address as "instructive which foresaw details of national reconstruction in independent India."[62] Throughout his first term of presidentship, Bose devoted attention to popularising the concept of national planning.[63]

However, indirectly this had a negative impact on Bose's political career. One of the main reasons behind Bose's widening rift with the right wing and Gandhi in particular, was his emphasis on economic planning which was anathema to Gandhi. In all his speeches, Bose sought to dispel the apprehension that cottage industries would be marginalized, but Gandhi's reaction to the idea of national planning was most evident from his statement that "Without *Khadi* there is no *swaraj* for the millions."[64] He also wrote to Nehru, who was the Chairman of the Planning Committee, on August 18, 1939, "I have never been able to understand to appreciate the labours of the Committee. I have not understood the purpose of the numerous sub-committees. It has appeared to me that much money and labour are being wasted on an effort which will bring little or no fruit."[65] When a deadlock was created in the Congress following Bose's re-election in 1939, Gandhi wrote to him on April 10, 1939, "How can we meet on the political platform? Let us agree to differ there and let us meet on the social, moral and municipal platforms. I cannot add the economic for we have discovered our differences on that platform also."[66] Here Gandhi was obviously referring to Bose's idea of national planning. It clearly follows that Bose's repeated assurances about developing cottage industries simultaneously with heavy industries had failed to make any impression on Gandhi. In fact, this was a major factor behind Gandhi's subsequent opposition to his re-election as Congress President. Amales Tripathi observes that Bose's Haripura address contained deep thoughts on the aspect of planning unheard of before. But this was the reason why the rightists did not appreciate his speech and were determined at the Haripura session to oust Bose at Tripuri. Ashim Chatterjee argues in the same vein that after the clear enunciation of his ideas by Bose at Haripura, his eventual exit from the Congress was a foregone conclusion. This is corroborated by Bose's article entitled "Looking Back", published in the *Forward Bloc* on November 4, 1939, where he clearly says that, circles in close touch with Mahatma Gandhi disapproved of his step to appoint the

National Planning Committee and regarded it as a menace to the aims and objects of the Village Industries Association created by Gandhi. Some went so far as to opine that the National Planning Committee would undo the life work of Gandhi.[67] From the available source material, it appears that Bose had been able to create a widespread consciousness in intellectual circles about the necessity of national planning and important newspapers and journals like *Modern Review, Hindustan Standard, Amrita Bazar Patrika*, etc., supported him.[68] Rabindra Nath Tagore also became impressed with the idea of planning as evident from a letter to Nehru on November 19, 1938, saying that he was convinced on the basis of his discussion with the reputed scientist Meghnad Saha, about the importance of scientific planning for Indian industries.[69] Bose's championing of the cause of planning was one of the causes behind Tagore's support for his re-election. This is evident from the letter of Anil Chanda, Tagore's secretary, to Nehru on November 28, 1938.[70] All these developments appear to have alarmed Gandhi and stiffened his opposition to Bose.

Bose's emphasis on the Roman script was also opposed by Gandhi who considered it unscientific and recommended the *Devanagari* script.[71] Moreover, Bose's repeated references to socialism and Soviet Russia and also his declaration at Haripura that in independent India, the "have nots" will benefit at the expense of the "haves",[72] appears to have made Gandhi apprehensive that Bose was thinking in terms of class conflict. His call for the mobilization of the labour and peasantry was likely to impart a militant dimension to the struggle and force the Congress to stray from the path of non-violence. Finally, unlike Bose, who ruled out all possibilities of the Congress withering away after independence, Gandhi felt that the Congress would have outlived its use after independence.[73]

Bose's consistent stand in his opposition to the federal scheme as clarified in his Haripura address, also accentuated his rift with the right wing. As Congress President, he insisted that the "slightest weakness in our attitude towards the federal scheme is bound to weaken our hands and strengthen those of the British government" and also made it clear that "acceptance of the federal scheme would amount to political suicide by the Congress."[74] Gandhi evidently did not appreciate this as evident from his letter to Bose on December 22, 1938 saying, "I do not like your constant threats about federation."[75] From the available source material, it appears that the rightist group was not averse to a compromise with the British

government on the issue of federation and thus did not react favourably to Bose's opposition to the federal scheme. This perpetrated a serious breach between Bose and the right wing after his re-election as Congress president in 1939. This issue will be taken up in a subsequent chapter. Bose devoted great care and attention to the communal question because, as evident from has Haripura speech, he apprehended that the British would partition the country before leaving it and it was therefore necessary for Hindus and Muslims to stand united to thwart any such design.

As Congress President, Bose entered into protracted negotiations with the leader of the Muslim League, Muhammed Ali Jinnah. However, a deadlock was created following Jinnah's insistence on the recognition of the Muslim League as the sole representative and authoritative organization of the Muslims of India.[76] This was not acceptable to Bose who countered Jinnah saying that there were many Muslim organizations which functioned independently of the Muslim League and which were supporters of the Congress.[77] Finally, Bose informed Jinnah that no settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League was possible.[78]

Following the failure of his talks with Jinnah, Bose sought to explore other avenues to improve the communal situation. He addressed himself to the problem of ministry formation in Bengal. In 1937, elections to the provincial legislatures were held when the Krishak Praja Party (KPP) of Fazlul Huq was voted to power. Fazlul Huq came forward with the offer of forming a coalition ministry with the Congress in Bengal, a proposal which was acceptable to both Bose and his brother Sarat Chandra Bose.[79] However, the Congress High Command did not agree to it and subsequently Fazlul Huq formed a coalition with the Muslim League.

The Fazlul Huq ministry gradually assumed a reactionary character as nine out of the eleven ministers were *zamindars* and the ministry survived because of the backing of 23 European members. Thus, it was not possible for the Huq ministry to act contrary to the interests of the colonial rulers. At this stage the Health Minister, Nausher Ali resigned and Tamizuddin Khan formed a separate group whose leaders became vocal in their criticism of the Huq ministry. They were backed by some Muslim councilors who were close to Bose. From his reading of the situation, Bose considered it necessary for the Congress to form a coalition with nationalist Muslims of the KPP who opposed the Muslim League.[80] Bose as Congress President, wanted to install the Congress in power in Bengal pulling down the Muslim League

– KPP coalition, and substituting it by a Congress – KPP coalition. He was convinced that it would prevent the communalization of Bengal politics and also pave the way for Hindu-Muslim unity. Gandhi, however, sent a letter to Bose on December 18, 1938 through G.D.Birla in which he wrote that after an exhaustive discussion with Maulana Azad, G.D. Birla and Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, he had become "more than ever convinced that we should not aim at ousting the ministry. We shall gain nothing by a reshuffle and probably we shall lose much by including Congressmen in the ministry. I feel therefore, that the best way of securing comparative purity of administration and a continuity of a settled programme would be to aim at having all the reforms that we desire carried out by the present ministry."[81] Bose reacted to Gandhi's letter on December 21, 1938, saying that it had come as a profound shock to him. He expressed his astonishment at Gandhi having changed his mind at the instance of Birla, Azad and Sarkar and had not cared to consult those like himself who were responsible for running the Congress organization in Bengal.[82] Bose's logic was that the continuation of the Muslim League – KPP coalition ministry in Bengal was bound to communalize the Bengal situation. He also noted that unlike Gandhi who attached much importance to the views of Azad on the issue of ministry formation, he had fundamental differences with Azad and did not endorse his view that in Muslim majority provinces like Bengal, communal Muslim ministries should be allowed to continue in office.[83] The episode indicates that Gandhi may have been influenced by wealthy capitalists like Birla who were thus able to exert a powerful influence on important decisions of the Congress. Nirad Chandra Chowdhuri reportedly told Leonard Gordon that Birla wanted to perpetuate the economic domination of the Marwaris of Calcutta and Gandhi deliberately acted in his interest because he was against Bengali interests. This point is debatable but there is a strong body of opinion in support of the view that Gandhi had a close nexus with Birla. Professor Surya Banerji explains how Bose was let down by the capitalist class of India while Gandhi had an unbroken nexus with them. Bimal Dasgupta has gone to the extent of saying that "Gandhi's word was Birla's word." While these views are debatable, it cannot be denied that Gandhi attached great importance to the view of Birla even at the expense of marginalizing leaders like Bose.[84] however, this created a gulf between him and Bose because Bose naturally felt marginalized as Congress President. He obviously did not want non-Congressmen (and perhaps outright capitalists) like Birla to determine the important decisions of the Congress.

Whether Bose's insistence on pulling down the Huq ministry was justified, is a debatable point, since many eminent Indians, apart from Gandhi, like Acharya P.C. Roy, were against the idea.[85] Muslim public opinion could also not be ignored. However, there were at that time, a large section of non-communal nationalist Muslims in the Bengal Legislative Council who took pride in the composite culture of Hindus and Muslims. Thus, if the Congress – KPP coalition had been formed as desired by Bose, there was a possibility that it could have had a positive effect on the communal situation.[86] It would have also been able to counter the divide and rule policy of the British government and Bose would have found the communal situation sufficiently congenial to press his demand for *Purna Swaraj* which would have been supported by both Hindus and Muslims.

Bose was however, successful in forming a Congress coalition ministry in Assam. Under the Government of India Act of 1935, limited self-government was introduced in the provinces. Sadaullah, who was the leader of the Muslim League, formed a coalition ministry with European, tribal and non-tribal members on April 1, 1937. The Congress was in opposition with Gopinath Bardoli as its leader. The new ministry had no specific plan or programme and the administration was run virtually by the Europeans. Sadaullah resigned and formed the second coalition ministry, which lasted from February 5, 1938 to September 19, 1938. Sadaullah resigned on September 13, 1938 in the wake of a no confidence vote. Bardoli then tried to form the Congress ministry with the support of the Tribal League but was in need of just two more supporters. At this stage, Bose helped Bardoli to form the ministry by ironing out all differences with Congressman. Bose helped Bardoli in the hope that it would strengthen the Congress base in Assam. The new ministry, which was sworn in on September 18, 1938, survived and thanks were expressed to Bose.[87] From Bose's letter to Gandhi dated December 22, 1938, it is known that he received the backing of Sardar Patel in installing the Congress in coalition with the Gopinath Bardoli ministry.[88] From the testimony of Bose's close associate Narendranarayan Chakravarti. it is known that many Congressmen, who were initially skeptical about the wisdom of Bose's action in Assam, ultimately appreciated it.[89] Apart from the communal problem, municipal administration occupied a large part of Bose's mind.

Even as Congress President, Bose evinced keen interest in the Calcutta Corporation and expressed his idea of municipal socialism. Speaking at the Bombay Corporation on May 19, 1938, he emphasized the need to implement

the programme of C.R. Das who wanted to transform civic bodies into poor men's corporations. [90]Taking the cue from his mentor, Bose emphasized on "inspiration, zeal and passion to serve the poor."[91] Central to Bose's conception of municipal socialism was the ideal of service to the poor. He also believed that municipal bodies were the stepping-stones to the fulfillment of the idea of local self-government. Bose clearly revealed his democratic orientation when he said in this address "Today it is realized by all political thinkers and students of civic affairs that the real school of democracy is local self-government. Therefore there is a double advantage which we derive from our association with local bodies."[92]

During his first term as Congress President, the municipalities of Lucknow and Karachi felicitated Bose. In his reply to the address of welcome presented to him at Lucknow in November 1938, Bose refuted the claim that local self-government was a British contribution to India saying that there were local bodies and institutions in India as far back as the Maurya dynasty.[93] However, Bose was categorical on the point that whatever was best in the Western institutions of local self-government, deserved to be emulated. The Labour Party had implemented a progressive and far-reaching municipal programme after capturing the London Country Council.[94] He observed further that socialist thought, whether anybody accepted it or not, had permeated all over and the atmosphere of India was surcharged with socialism, "but we must make a scientific study of the municipal problems in Vienna."[95] In his reply to the civil reception at Karachi on December 5, 1938, Bose said that civic affairs and politics were inseparable in a country like India and urged the Corporation of Karachi to follow the results of new experiments and tasks being undertaken by municipal administrations throughout the world.[96]

Bose's interest in municipal socialism reveals three main ingredients of his thought. Firstly, he believed that despite India's rich indigenous heritage of local self-government, she must accept whatever was exemplary in the Western institutions, even in Great Britain. Here, he maintained a continuity in his thought pattern as he had always been an avowed opponent of British imperialism, but was at the same time ready to accept many facets of British life. Secondly, he felt that municipal socialism would create the necessary setting for the socialistic pattern of society that he envisaged for India. Thirdly, Bose's emphasis on local institutions implies that while he was in favour of a strong centralized government, he also thought in terms of

democratic decentralization of power. In an article entitled "Free India and Her Problems", in the German periodical *While and Macht* in August 1942, Bose spoke of decentralization of power and the granting of more responsibility to provincial governments after an initial period of centralization.[97] Thus, his basic commitment appears to be for democracy.

During Bose's first term as Congress President he had many differences with the High Command but was cautious and circumspect in his approach and did not carry these differences to a breaking point. For instance, he did not approve of the police firing on the labourers of Bombay following the passage of the Trade Disputes Bill and tried to force the issue with Sardar Patel, but ultimately did not risk a break with him. The Congress Ministry of Bombay was responsible for the passage of the Bill that was considered anti labour.[98] Though he espoused the cause of socialism, he could not take up the cause of the socialists in a forceful manner. When in September 1938, the Congress Socialists staged a walk out from the meeting of the All Indian Congress Committee; Gandhi challenged the Socialists to leave the Congress if they could not accept the verdict of the majority. Bose as Congress President could not risk a break with the Congress on this issue and failed to champion the cause of the socialists.[99] Leonard Gordon suggests that Bose was cautious because did not wish to relinquish his position as Congress President.[100] Bose probably refrained from resigning because he did not want reins of leadership to pass on to the hands of the rightists at a critical juncture of the national struggle.

It should also be admitted that Bose's style of functioning was not rebellious. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya has testified that Bose was "one of the silent Presidents of the Congress. He was singularly free from a desire to take sides. Differences did not create situations, much less even scenes."[101] Bose evidently maintained a low profile during his first term as President and to that extent, Gandhi's calculation that he would be able to cool Bose's rebellious instinct by having him elected as President, proved correct. The question that arises therefore is why did Gandhi still decide against Bose's re-election as President. The reason appears to be that Gandhi observed that despite a mellowing of his tone, Bose had not deviated from any of his basic principles, policies or programmes which were at variance with those envisaged by Gandhi. Thus, there was no question of converting Bose to his own viewpoint and he was likely to revert back to the role of a rebel in the future and pose a direct challenge to Gandhi. Thus, Gandhi wrote to

Maniben Patel on October 28, 1938, "What is happening about Subhas Babu is not out of my mind. But Patel was of the view that we should wait till Jawaharlal's return from Europe, so I kept silent. There is bound to be some difficulty this time in selecting the President."[102] Sisir Kumar Bose is of the opinion that Bose was able to assure the Gandhian group by adopting a cautious attitude.[103] In view of the facts mentioned above, this does not appear to be correct. It may be safely concluded that by the end of Bose's first term as Congress President, the seeds of his future confrontation with the right wing were laid.

Bose's Re-election and Resignation as Congress President

Bose decided to contest for re-election as congress President against the wishes of the right wing and Gandhi in particular. Gandhian group sponsored the candidature of Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. Bose himself was not without supporters. From Tagore's letter to Bose on January 1, 1939, it is known that Tagore had earlier requested Gandhi to consider the cause of Bose's re-election as President. From Gandhi's letter to Nehru on November 24, 1938, it is known that he was not agreeable to Tagore's proposal and expressed the view that Bose needed to be free from presidential work if he was to rid Bengal of corruption. Gandhi initially proposed the name of Maulana Azad as President but Azad withdrew at the last moment and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya was the next choice.[104] There are several issues behind Bose's resolve to stand for re-election in deference to the wishes of Gandhi. He saw no reason why only Gandhi's choice had to be adhered to. Firstly, he did not share the view of the rightists that the Congress President was like a constitutional monarch.[105] From Bose's statement of January 15, 1939, it is known that he considered the position of the President analogous to that of the President of America who nominated his own cabinet.[106] His logic was that the delegates should be allowed freedom to vote as they liked, otherwise the election system should be ended and the President nominated by the Working Committee. Anil Chandra Nag, revolutionary of the Sri Sangha group believes that Bose's decision to contest for re-election was correct because withdrawal would have meant acceptance of Gandhi's word as final. Prof. Suniti Kumar Ghosh too has expressed similar views.[107] It

follows from this that Bose emphasized on the democratization of the Congress whereby the election of the President should not be subjected to moral coercion.

To Bose it was a matter of principle rather than a personal issue as evident from statement on January 28, 1939, that, "It is no use having a democratic constitution for the Congress if the delegates do not have the freedom to think and vote as they like."

Moreover, Bose considered the federal scheme (which has been mentioned earlier) the main issue. He apprehended that, if the reins of leadership passed into the hands of the rightists, it would pave the way for a compromise with the government on the issue of federation. In a statement made on January 27, 1939, he went to the extent of saying that, the rightists wanted a President who would act as their tool because they were secretly contemplating such a compromise. Bose alleged that, Sitaramayya's name had been proposed by the other members of the working committee without his knowledge. It strengthened his suspicion that the rightists were preparing for a compromise on federation.[108] He even, expressed his readiness to withdraw from the contest if an "anti-federationist" like Acharya Nerendra Dev was made President.[109]

In the election contest Bose defeated Sitaramayya by 1580 votes to 1377 and was re-elected Congress President at the Tripuri session of 1939. Gandhi reacted to Bose's electoral triumph with a statement of January 31, 1939, saying, "I was instrumental in inducing Dr. Pattabhi not to withdraw his name... and the defeat is more mine than his. And I am nothing if I do not represent definite principles and policies. Therefore, it is plain to me that the delegates do not approve of the principles and policy for which I stand. I rejoice in this defeat."[110] He added, "After all, Subhas Babu is not an enemy of the country. He has suffered for it. In his opinion, his is the most forward and boldest policy programme. The minority can only wish it all success. If they cannot keep pace with it, they must come out of the Congress. Those, therefore, who feel uncomfortable in being in the Congress, may come out not in a spirit of ill will but with the deliberate purpose of rendering more effective service.[111]

This was clearly a statement of non-cooperation with Bose. It also appears that Gandhi's differences with Bose had a personal element. Scholars like Prof. Chittabrata Palit argue that the differences were more ideological rather than personal. According to Prof. Chittabrata Palit, it is improper to

interpret Gandhi – Bose differences as a personal issue and accuse Gandhi of being desirous of usurping the reins of leadership from Bose who was on the rising tide of popularity. The personal question is often unduly overdrawn.[112] However, it should be pointed out that this was truer of the earlier period of their relationship. In 1939, Gandhi took Dr. Sitaramayya's defeat as a personal defeat and indirectly incited his followers to come out of the Congress. Amales Tripathi rightly describes Gandhi's statement as a direct challenge to Bose clothed in polished language. Gordon endorses this view and remarks that Gandhi's statement hinted that he was preparing to teach Bose a lesson in the future. Mihir Bose writes that Gandhi had declared war on Bose, who had inflicted on him, a bitter personal blow. B.R.Tomlinson comments in the same vein that personal differences were at the heart of the Gandhi – Bose conflict. Dr. P.K. Chatterji observes, "It is likely that the situation was aggravated by personal differences."[113] On February 4, 1939, Bose reacted to Gandhi's statement of January 31, 1939, describing the election result as a defeat for himself. Bose said that he did not consider the election result a defeat for Gandhi because the delegates were not called to vote either for or against Gandhi. Expressing the hope that there would be no occasion for the minority members to non-cooperate with the majority, Bose said, "I have on some occasions felt constrained to differ from Mahatma Gandhi but I yield to none in my respect for his personality. I do not know what sort of opinion Mahatmaji has of me. But whatever his view may be, it will always be my aim and object to try and win his confidence for the simple reason that it will be a tragic thing for me if I succeed in winning the confidence of other people but fail to win the confidence of India's greatest man."[114]

In this statement Bose appears markedly conciliatory in his attitude towards Gandhi. It seems that he realized that without Gandhi's cooperation, it would be impossible for him to function as president.

Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya observes that Gandhi's description of Bose's victory as a defeat for himself, created consternation in the Congress and there was a reversal of positions and floor crossing by a number of delegates.[115] This confronted Bose with a most difficult situation and forced him to adopt a conciliatory posture. Bose had decided to run for re-election in defiance of the stand of the Congress High Command because he depended on the support of the leftists. He was justified to the extent that a large chunk of his votes came from provinces that were leftist strongholds.[116]

However, he had not contended with the possibility of continued opposition from the Gandhian group that he would be incapable of overcoming with the support of the leftists.

The Tripuri Congress

The Tripuri Congress sealed the fate of Bose. On the eve of the Tripuri session, Bose fell ill and called for the postponement of a Working Committee meeting scheduled to be held at Wardha on February 22, 1939. In an article entitled "My Strange Illness" published in *Modern Review* in April 1939, Bose stated that he had called for the postponement of the meeting only because he felt that Congress resolutions ought to be drafted in the presence of the President to ensure their unanimous acceptance. At the same time, he had asked Patel to inform him about the views of the other members of the Working Committee. According to Bose, had they insisted on framing resolutions in his absence, he would not have obstructed them.[117] This clearly shows that Bose did not function in a dictatorial manner as Congress President.[118] However, twelve members of the Working Committee including Patel, Azad, Rajendra Prasad, etc. submitted their resignations to Bose. Gandhi's biographer, D.G.Tendulkar, testifies that Gandhi drafted the letter of resignation.[119] It has been opined that this was a pre-planned move because the rightists were determined to follow a policy of non-cooperation with Bose.[120] This appears quite plausible because despite a telegraphic message from Bose to Patel asking him to wire to him the opinion of the other members, Patel and the others used his request for postponement of the Working Committee meeting as a pretext for their resignation.

Despite his illness, Bose arrived at Tripuri and his presidential speech was read out by his brother Sarat Chandra Bose. Unlike the Haripura address, the Tripuri address was much shorter. The novelty about it was the emphasis on utilizing the international situation to India's advantage and the need to serve an ultimatum to the British government to force the issue of *Purna Swaraj*.[121] He considered the time ripe for a major assault on British imperialism because the international situation was in India's favour.[122] It may be inferred that since the possibilities of the outbreak of a war were very strong, Bose naturally wanted to make the fullest use of the situation, which was likely to subject the British government to serious stress and strain. This was in keeping with his pattern of reasoning.

He also advocated a systematic and comprehensive policy for conducting the states people's movements and reiterated the views, which he had explained at Haripura, on the need of the Congress to work in conjunction with labour and peasants organizations.[123] Finally, Bose stressed the need for unity, saying, "if we sink our differences, pool our resources and put all our weight in the national struggle, we can make our attack on British imperialism, irresistible."[124] It may be inferred from this that Bose hoped to secure the cooperation of his colleagues in the Congress, by urging them to subordinate personal differences to the greater national interest.

Bose's Tripuri address lacked the fervour of the Haripura address. Chittabrata Palit opines that Bose foresaw that he would have to resign and thus his tone had mellowed. Pattabhi Sitaramayya notes that though the Tripuri address of Bose was the briefest in the history of the Congress, it laid bare his heart before the nation.[125] However, it reflected a desire for an immediate showdown with British imperialism that had been absent in his first presidential address. Unlike the Haripura address that had been based on careful thought on India's current and perceived .problems, the Tripuri address was essentially, a call to action.

The subsequent developments at Tripuri completely belied Bose's expectations about securing the cooperation of his colleagues. Gandhi had decided not to attend the Tripuri Congress.[126] On February 27, 1939, Gandhi left for Rajkot where he undertook a fast in support of the movement for representative government going on there.[127] Professor Suniti Kumar Ghosh has described this action of Gandhi as deliberately intended to create a difficult situation for Bose. Prof. Ghosh is of the opinion that Gandhi knew beforehand that the rightists would devise some artifice to out maneuver Bose using his name, but he would be able to disown all responsibility by staying away.[128]

At the Tripuri Congress, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant introduced a resolution on March 7, 1939, which stated that, "In view of the critical situation that may develop during the coming year, and in view of the fact that Mahatma Gandhi can lead the Congress from victory to victory during such a crisis, the Congress regards it as imperative that the executive authority of the Congress should command his implicit confidence, and requests the Congress President to nominate the Working Committee for the coming year."[129] The resolution was passed by 218 votes to 135 on March 12, 1939.

The Pant resolution reflected a sense of urgency on the part of the right wing to reassert Gandhi's paramount position in the Congress, which had been challenged by Bose's re-election. Amales Tripathi observes that Gandhi saw in Bose a dangerous challenge to his leadership.[130] A large body of opinion considers the Pant resolution undemocratic and unconstitutional. Amales Tripathi and Hugh Toye both feel that Bose should have ruled the resolution out of order. According to V.P. Saini, "The question arises, whose confidence the executive should have? Should it be the confidence of the Congress or somebody else? What did the constitution of the Congress say about it? If it was so essential that the Working Committee should be in accordance with the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi, then why was no amendment made to the Constitution of the Congress Party?" According to Niharendu Dutta Mazumdar the Pant resolution showed a spirit of vindictiveness on the part of the members of the Working Committee.[131] Objectively speaking, the spirit of the resolution was undemocratic as it implied a negation of the popular mandate by which Bose had been elected and the determination of the right wing to establish Gandhi's supremacy even at the cost of flouting the norms of democracy. It was a clear indication that the Congress was assuming an authoritarian character. Bose himself considered the resolution *ultra-vires* and yet allowed it to be tabled. According to him, "I am temperamentally too democratic to attach importance to technical or constitutional points. Further I felt that it would be unmanly to take shelter behind constitutional points at a time when I thought there was the possibility of an adverse vote."[132] It is thus quite clear that Bose consistently abided by his policy of maintaining the norms of democracy in the Congress.

The stand taken by Bose's leftist allies on the Pant resolution should be also mentioned. The communists and the Royists (the Radical League of M.N. Roy) voted against the Pant resolution, but the Congress Socialist Party (C.S.P.) remained neutral when the resolution was put to vote. Bose considered this an act of betrayal that ensured the passage of the resolution.[133] The stand of the C.S.P. was pro-right, though its leader Jaiprakash Narayan justified it by saying that the C.S.P. considered a split in the Congress inadvisable at that point of time.[134] Many scholars and critics are of the opinion that if the C.S.P. had not deviated from its leftist posture, the history of the country would have been different.[135] This is a subjective view, but the C.S.P. undoubtedly played a self-contradictory role at Tripuri, which contributed to the weakening of Bose's position.

In the aftermath of the Tripuri Congress, Bose made efforts to end the Congress deadlock through negotiations with Gandhi, but he had become less confident of success. In a letter to Amiya Nath Bose, he gave a clear hint that he might resign in the future. Professor Prasanta Kumar Ghosh is of the opinion that, the Pant resolution was a challenge for the leftists but the C.S.P. was in favour of maintaining unity at any cost. Had it responded positively to Bose's call for support in 1939, it would have created a new chapter in the history of the leftist movement. According to Gopal Haldar, a noted communist leader, "the performance of the Socialist leaders in declaring their neutrality, showed how far they had travelled away not only form their own compatriots but from their own socialist following."[135]

Aftermath of the Tripuri Congress

After the Tripuri Congress, Bose commenced a prolonged correspondence with Gandhi. In a letter dated March 25, 1939, he asked Gandhi for his interpretation of the Pant resolution and Base's position as Congress President after its passage.[136] In another letter dated March 26, 1939, he expressed confidence in Gandhi, who alone, he felt, could ensure that both sides forgot the past and worked together.[137] He wrote that he took the matter in a sporting spirit himself.[138] In yet another letter dated March 31, 1939, Bose urged Gandhi to give the call for struggle. By struggle, Bose meant the struggle for attainment of India's national demand.[139]

Gandhi's replies to Bose indicated that he was not inclined to cooperate with him. He did not give his interpretation of the Pant resolution in categorical terms, and advised Bose in a letter dated March 30, 1939, that since he considered the resolution out of order, his choice of the working Committee should be unfettered.[140] On April 2, 1939, Gandhi wrote to Bose that he considered his own views diametrically opposed to those of Bose and did not endorse Bose's conviction that the time was ripe for the commencement of struggle. He said, "I smell violence in the air I breathe."[141] Gandhi also advised Bose to form a homogeneous rather than a composite cabinet. Leonard Gordon writes that Bose wanted the satisfaction of victory over authority and approval from the vanquished as well.[142]

Despite Gandhi's negative replies, Bose continued his conciliatory efforts and in three letters, dated April 6, 1939, April 13, 1939 and April 15, 1939, he tried to convince Gandhi that a homogenous cabinet was undesirable

because joint action was the need of the hour. He also said that he did not understand why Gandhi considered his views diametrically opposed to those of Bose. Somnath Roy comments that Bose should have heeded the timely of M.N.Roy to form the Working Committee independently, but he let down the leftists who voted him to power.[143] Gandhi continued to insist that he would not impose a cabinet on Bose, and said that he considered himself incompetent to bring the warring elements together.[144] In April 1939, Bose personally met Gandhi at Sodepur but failed to make any impression on him. Shortly afterwards he resigned as President in May 1939.

The Tripuri Crisis in Retrospect

It should be noted at the very outset that the Congress crisis was unavoidable. Bose was apparently under the impression that he would be able to conciliate Gandhi. He evidently expected Gandhi to take a larger view of things and sought his intervention in resolving the Congress deadlock. Amales Tripathi says that it was surprising that Bose did not realize that his real fight was against Gandhi. It was also beneath his dignity to approach Gandhi for mediation after having decided to contest the election against his wishes. Haripada Chowdhury also expresses the same opinion. Hugh Toye, on the other hand, believes that Bose did not seriously seek the mediation of Gandhi though he may have made a show of it. However, careful review of the Bose-Gandhi correspondence reveals that Bose largely depended on Gandhi's cooperation for salvaging his position.[145] This was a mistake, because while he expected Gandhi to assign priority to the national interest, Gandhi believed that the national interest would be served by removing Bose from the presidential chair. Bose's conciliatory attitude, as noted earlier, also appears to have been the result of a belated realization that despite his electoral triumph he would not be able to retain his position without Gandhi's support.

Secondly, opinions vary on the point whether Bose should have appointed a Working Committee independently. A number of scholars and revolutionaries are of the opinion that Bose should have done so and not resigned because his resignation enabled the rightists to reassert their domination over the Congress. Amales Tripathi is of the opinion that Bose should have courageously formed the Working Committee because nobody would have been able to oppose him in the face of Gandhi's written statement

that the Working Committee should be entirely of Bose's choice. Geetashree Banerjii also observes that "Bose should have constituted the Working Committee without the old guards and seen how his opponents came down to at least conditional acceptance of his programme."[146] M.N.Roy had written to him on February 1, 1939, that after Gandhi's statement that he considered Sitaramayya's defeat to be his own, it was clear that he had declared war against Bose in the form of non-cooperation. According to Roy, the Congress needed a new leadership entirely free from the principles of Gandhism. Roy advised Bose to form the Working Committee with a 60 percent leftist majority.[147] Revolutionaries like the late Amalendu Ghosh however feel that M.N.Roy at that time had no real standing in Indian politics for Bose to attach importance to his advice.[148] Objectively speaking, the view that Bose ought to have formed the Working Committee appears to be untenable. Firstly, the idea of Bose ousting a leader of Gandhi's stature and mass base from power appears improbable. Secondly, even if he had decided to form the Working Committee on his own, it is highly unlikely that Gandhi or the right wing would have compromised and cooperated with him. It would probably have resulted in a most undesirable split in the Congress at a critical hour. Thirdly, Bose appears to have realized that his leftist support base was not very strong, as contradictions had begun to surface among the leftists. The communists had voted against the "Pant Resolution" after considerable vacillation. Initially the Politburo of the party had decided to observe neutrality like the C.S.P. had done, and it was due to the pressure of communist leaders like Ajoy Ghosh, Somnath Lahiri and Niharendu Dutta Majumdar that the party decision was changed. However, these leaders came in for much criticism from the party leadership. Amitava Chandra rightly observes that, though in 1939 Bose's rapport with the Communist Party of India (C.P.I.) continued, discordant notes had also begun to sound.[149] While noting in a letter to Amiya Nath Bose that the C.S.P. had betrayed him at Tripuri, Bose also observed that the C.P.I. too initially sailed with the C.S.P. but reversed its policy following a revolt in its rank and file.[150] He was thus, not very confident of salvaging his position in the future with the help of the leftists who were divided among themselves. It is also noteworthy that M.N. Roy fell apart with Bose almost immediately afterwards. Moreover. Bose was orientationally a democrat and did not want to go against the Pant resolution once it had been passed. Under the circumstances, Bose's refusal to form the Working Committee appears justified; since he lacked the requisite

strength to match the combined might of the Gandhian group. Prof. Gautam Chattopadhyay says that left unity alone cannot deliver the goods but can only act as a catalyst in pushing the country forward. Bose had many loyal leftist followers but they could not make an impact compared to that of the Gandhian group that carried the majority. Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose justified Bose's stand from a different angle. He argues that Bose did not want to offer to the British the chance to say that the Indians were divided amongst themselves, and hence refrained from splitting the Congress. He felt that a civil war in the nationalist ranks was injurious to the national cause at that point of time.[151]

So far as the causes behind Gandhi's inflexible attitude towards Bose are concerned, scholars and revolutionaries have provided several explanations. In the first place, Gandhi appears to have apprehended that Bose's plans would give a violent turn to the movement before the opportune moment arrived for commencing the next phase of struggle. Prof. Chittabrata Palit feels that Gandhi thought that premature commencement of the struggle would lead to the eruption of sporadic violence, which the British would be able to suppress easily.[152]

Secondly, it appears that Gandhi realized that he would not be able to control Bose even if he gave him another chance to fall in line with him. According to Amales Tripathi, Gandhi wanted to suppress the rebellious instinct of Bose once and for all. Prasanta Kumar Ghosh observes that when Gandhi recommended Bose's name as Congress President, he thought that Bose would be amenable to his line of thinking, but Bose wanted to co-opt the others to his line of action. Gandhi was not prepared to accept the new dispensation of Bose.[153]

Another explanation given is that Gandhi suspected on the basis of reports in 1938 that Bose had held secret meetings with the German Consul in Bombay that he had became inclined towards fascism. This has been corroborated by Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose. According to him Gandhi was gullible by nature and many interested parties took advantage of this to instigate him against Bose, within reports of his fascist inclinations.[154]

Finally, Pradip Bose cites a personal reason behind Gandhi's attitude towards Bose. According to him "Gandhi surmised that Bose had the capacity to carry both the country and the Congress with him if he was elected to another term as President. It would have meant complete defeat for Gandhian principles and policies." V.P. Saini also takes the view that, for Gandhi, his

conflict with Bose was personal, while from Bose's side it was ideological. Gandhi realized that Bose had posed a threat to his position and thus he was not prepared to accommodate him in any way. Prof. Gautam Chattopadhyay contests these views on the ground that Gandhi was not the one to take a political stand out of fear of being overshadowed in the Congress. However, *The Statesman* published an editorial expressing the apprehension that "Bose's triumph might mean the *disappearance* of some of the familiar members of the Congress High Command" and posed the question "Will Wardha cease to be the Congress capital?" Thus, there was a lurking suspicion in some circles that Gandhian paramountcy was being jeopardised.[155]

None of the above views is sufficient by itself to explain Gandhi's rigid stand but each appears to contain same elements of truth. Though there is no evidence to suggest that Bose had expressed himself in favour of a violent revolution in 1939, the possibility of his opting for such a course with the intensification of the struggle (which was in consonance with the views expressed in *The Indian Struggle* and elsewhere) could not be ruled out, and this must have weighed heavily with Gandhi.

Whether Gandhi was influenced by reports about Bose's fascist connection cannot be verified but Gandhi must have been aware of Bose's admiration for some features of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy and this may have led him to believe the reports about Bose's leanings. Pradip Bose's view that Gandhi apprehended complete defeat of his policies, if Bose was allowed to continue as President, cannot be fully endorsed because Bose had not been able to achieve a mass base like Gandhi at the all India level to pose a threat to Gandhi's leadership. However, he may have apprehended that Bose with his charisma might be able to influence public opinion to some extent. As a result, Gandhi would have found it difficult to execute some of his contemplated programmes. It is an interesting though hypothetical question as to whether Bose would have followed the Gandhian line had Gandhi decided to give him another chance. From Bose's conciliatory attitude, it appears that he might have temporarily refrained from challenging Gandhi but since he was by nature, restless and impatient he was always likely to adopt an independent line and this would have created a fresh crisis in the Congress. It may be conjectured that Gandhi wanted to avoid this contingency and his attitude towards Bose was based on his assessment of Bose's nature.

There is considerable difference of opinion among scholars and revolutionaries on the justification of Gandhi's hard stand against Bose.

Amales Tripathi says that Gandhi's action did not befit his image as the *Mahatma* as he was perceptibly vindictive towards Bose. He is of the view that if Gandhi had allowed Bose to nominate a few members of his choice and appointed the rest himself, Bose would not have resigned. Pratul Chandra Rakshit has also expressed his surprise as to how Gandhi could act contrary to the principles of the *Gita* as manifested in his attitude towards Bose. Hugh Toye remarks in the same vein that a grievous injustice was done to Bose, who despite being elected by popular mandate, was forcibly projected as a leader who had failed. The *Dhaka Prakash* commented on March 16, 1939, that Bose was the chosen leader of the people and the opposition of the right wing to him, revealed that they wanted to assert the totalitarian hegemony of the Congress. According to Harihar Das and B.C. Rath, "In the bid to get rid of the challenge to his leadership and turn the table against Subhas, Gandhi seemed to have forgotten the cardinal principle of democracy that is the unquestioned acceptance of the result of an election by both the parties." Bhiku Parikh indirectly points out Gandhi's rejection of democratic principles without naming Bose and says that, Gandhi permitted disagreement in the Congress provided it did not take the form of open dissent. When disagreement seemed irresolvable, Gandhi intervened and relied on persuasion, pressure and personal appeal to secure unity. Vivekananda Mukherjee has also observed that, Gandhi's attitude was morally indefensible. Bimal Dasgupta says that Gandhi's action amounted to a crime. Anil Chandra Nag testifies that Gandhi's image was tarnished in the estimation of the revolutionaries of Bengal. Bhupal Guha, a revolutionary of the Sri Sangha group, says that, Gandhi's attitude was against his gospel of non-violence. On the other hand, revolutionaries like Samarendra Basu Thakhur refuse to believe that Gandhi's action was unjust or undemocratic as he always had a personal affection for Bose. When he acted against him, he acted according to his own convictions, rather then personal rivalry. Dr. Chittabrata Palit too, feels that though Gandhi admittedly resorted to unconstitutional devices to oust Bose, he would have done an injustice to India in order to do justice to Bose. The main reason behind Gandhi's determination to dislodge Bose by unsettling the settled fact of his public election was that he felt that the way chalked out by Bose for the country's liberation was not correct. Pradip Bose argues from a different angle, that from Gandhi's side, his action was right because had Bose gained the ascendancy at that stage, the international situation would have ensured the triumph of his policies over those of

Gandhi. Thus the question of vindictiveness and injustice is irrelevant.[156] Considering the different viewpoints and versions, it may be stated that the issue should be judged from the political rather than ethical standpoint because the latter would raise subjective and moral questions of right and wrong. However, it is important to analyse the issue of Gandhi's decision to oust Bose from the presidential chair in the light of its effect on the national struggle. A group of scholars believe that, it was a blessing in disguise for Bose because it paved the way for his emergence as Netaji in the future. Amales Tripathi is of the opinion that, it was the non-cooperation of the Gandhian group that led to Bose's departure from India and subsequently his heroic exploits as *Netaji*. Prof. Samar Guha similarly states that, "Perhaps the Mahatma was unconsciously ordained by the will of providence to throw Subhas into an ordeal of fire and fury to emerge as the epic hero of India's freedom." Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose argues from a different angle that, Gandhi committed a historic crime by refusing to cooperate with Bose because it destroyed all chances of a historic agreement between Bose and Gandhi, the prospects of which were very bright in 1938. However, Dr. Bose agrees that Gandhi's attitude indirectly helped the cause of the country because Bose's escape produced a great impact on Gandhi and inspired him to give the call for struggle in 1942.[157] However, Bose's departure from India did not take place immediately after his resignation as Congress President. He formed the Forward Bloc and continued his efforts to induce Gandhi to give the call for struggle. It was Gandhi's refusal to respond to his call, which finally led Bose to the decision to escape from India in 1941. Thus, no linkage can be established between Bose's resignation as President and his emergence as Netaji.

The question as to whether Gandhi's stand produced a retrogressive effect on the national struggle is not easy to answer. It is highly doubtful whether Bose was then in a position to lead the national struggle to a final conclusion. According to Dr. Nemai Sadhan Bose, Bose's influence was limited to the youth and the students but they did not have much hold over the organization of the Congress. Dr. Chittabrata Palit observes that Bose's influence was mainly confined to the urban middle class.[158] At the same time it may be noted, that his resignation proved beneficial to him at another level. If Gandhi had cooperated with him, two alternatives would have been available to Bose. He would have either had to surrender to Gandhi and abide by his directives because the Pant Resolution would have bound his hands,

or alternatively. he could have rebelled against Gandhi. In either case, Bose's position would have been weakened. Had he rebelled, the likelihood of success would have been very slender because his leftist allies to whom he owed his election had not proved to be reliable during the Tripuri crisis particularly the C.S.P. and could not be expected to support him. Bose was able to play a relatively more positive role in the national struggle as the leader of the Forward Bloc, which he formed after resigning as President, because he enjoyed independence of action.[159]

As Congress President, Bose displayed considerable perspicacity in his thoughts on India's future path of development, expressed on a wide canvas in his Haripura address which was by far, the most insightful diagnosis of India's national problems by any Congress President. Without belittling Nehru's commitment to the cause of national planning it may be safely stated that Bose was the first Congress President to make it the cornerstone of the Congress agenda. Significantly, when Bose became President his characteristic ebullience was largely mellowed. He was able to avoid split creating disagreements and was able to work in conjunction with his colleagues.

Bose's breach with the Congress High Command, culminating in his resignation as president, was due to political, ideological and partly personal differences and partially because of his own aberrations especially his tactlessness. Bose proved to be deficient in crisis management skills and was also undiplomatic and emotional at times. As a politician he was not very successful and was incapable of overcoming the constraints to which he was subjected. He made some costly miscalculations and errors, which created problems for him. However, it testifies to his courage of conviction and his readiness to even challenge the authority of Gandhi, which no Congress President had done yet. Narahari Kaviraj says that, Bose had the moral courage to stand against Gandhi.[160] He did not vacillate or compromise on his basic principles at any time. Thus, the entire episode of his rift with the High Command, revealed his adherence to an independent line of action. In that sense, the phase under consideration was a turning point in Bose's career because this was the first time he came into a direct confrontation with the Congress mainstream leadership and had to step down from the Presidential chair. Superficial analysis would lead one to characterize this phase as the 'rise and fall of Bose', but even after this, he was a potent political force in India, and the strength of his impact never dwindled. It was

thus another prelude to his re-assertion and rehabilitation in future with renewed vigour and spirit.

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150. See Bose, n. 14, p. 144. Bose's differences with M.N.Roy will be discussed in the following chapter.

151. Personal interview with Gautam Chattopadhyay, Calcutta April 16, 1997. Personal interview with Sisir Kumar Bose, Calcutta, September 16, 1999.

152. Personal interview with Chittabrata Palit, Calcutta, March 24, 1998.

153. See Tripathi, n. 1, p. 259. Personal interview with Prasanta Kumar Ghosh, Calcutta, on June 28, 1998.

154. A.K.Majumdar, *Advent of Independence* (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1963), p. 155. Personal interview with Sisir Kumar Bose, Calcutta November 12, 1997.

155. See Bose, n. 5, p. 206. Letter from V.P. Saini to the researcher on November 24, 1999 Personal interview with Gautam Chattopadhyay on April 16, 1997. See the editorial "Storm signals", *The Statesman* (Calcutta), January 30, 1939.

156. See Tripathi, n. 131, p. 38 *Pratul Chandra Rakshit Smaranika* (Sarat Book House, Calcutta 1998), p.169. See Toye, n. 2, p. 55. See Ratanlal Chakravarti, *Bangladesher Dalil O Sangbadpatre Netaji Subhas Chandra* (Progressive Publishers, Calcutta, 1997), pp. 64-67. Harihar Das and B.C.Rath, *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose-Reassessment of His Ideas and Ideologies* (Pointer Publishers, Jaipur, 1997), p. 61. Bhiku Parikh, *Gandhi's Political Philosophy* (Ajanta, New Delhi, 1995), pp. 216-7. Vivekananda Mukherjee, *Jakhon Sampadak Chilam* (Sasadhar Prakashani, Calcutta 1991), p. 78. Personal interview with Bimal Dasgupta, Midnapore, on November 18, 1998. Personal interview with Anil Chandra Nag, Calcutta, January 4, 1998. Personal interview with Bhupal Guha, Calcutta December 21, 1997. Personal interviews with Samarendra Basu Thakur, Calcutta January 4, 1998 and December 15, 1997. Personal interview with Chittabrata Palit, Calcutta on March 24,

1998, July 7, 1999. Personal interview with Pradip Bose, February 8, 2000.

157. See Tripathi n. 131, p 38. Samar Guha, *The Mahatma and the Netaji-Two Men of Destiny India,* (Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1986), p. 66. Also personal interview with Samar Guha, Calcutta on November 1, 1998. See Bose, n. 6, p. 58. Personal interview with Sisir Kumar Bose, Calcutta on September 16, 1999.

158. Nemai Sadhan Bose, *Deshnayak Subhas Chandra* (Ananda Publishers, Calcutta, 1997), p. 219. See Palit n. 125, p. 33.

159. Bose's activities as leader of the Forward Bloc will he discussed in a subsequent chapter.

160. Narahari Kaviraj, "Jatiya Andolan O Subhas Chandra" in Narahari Kaviraj, ed., *Asamapta Biplab, Apurna, Akanksha* (K.P.Bagchi and Company, Calcutta, 1997), p. 194.

CHAPTER – VII

The Last Battle in India (1939-41)

After his overthrow from the presidential chair, Subhas Chandra Bose was confronted with a crisis of existence. There were now two options open to him, either to retire from the political scene or surrender before Gandhi. Bose opted for neither of these, but strove with undiminished ardour to provide a militant alternative to the Congress leadership. Though his new organization the Forward Bloc was intended to operate within the Congress, it actually symbolized a parallel movement. Bose's ceaseless exploration of an alternative to the Congress, found its culmination in the Forward Bloc. Through it, Bose was reinstated in the center stage of Indian politics and was ready to fire the next shot.

Creation of the Forward Bloc

Bose created the Forward Bloc in May 1939, with the objective of furnishing, a platform for the unification of the leftist forces.[1] The Forward Bloc was intended to act as a powerful subgroup within the Congress and act as a rallying point for the unorganized radical forces. In his thesis entitled "Forward Bloc –Its Justification", written from Kabul after his escape from India in January 1984, Bose justified the Forward Bloc as a historical necessity. The Gandhian movements, according to him, had begun to stagnate by 1934 and since 1938, Gandhism had tended to become increasingly static and hidebound. Under the circumstances, the Congress had lost its revolutionary dynamism and a genuine leftist bloc alone could restore it to its former status of a revolutionary organization.[2] Enunciating the logic of the Forward Bloc in dialectical perspective, Bose said that when the mainstream of a movement began to stagnate, a left wing invariably appeared with the object of stimulating progress. This was followed by a conflict between the right and the left wing, which was resolved through an adjustment whereby the left wing became the mainstream of the movement. Thus, the conflict between the thesis and the anti-thesis was solved through a higher synthesis.[3] Though Bose did not refer here to Hegel's idea of

dialectics, it is obvious that he thought in terms of Hegel's dialectical conception. In fact in some of his other writings, Bose had specifically mentioned Hegel. In an editorial entitled "Why Forward Bloc" in the *Forward Bloc* dated August 5, 1939, Bose referred specifically to the Hegelian dialectic and said that "Progress is neither unilinear nor is it always peaceful in character. Progress often takes place through conflict". Again, in an article, "My Personal Testament" written on November 29, 1940, Bose had written that "According to Hegel, the evolutionary process is dialectical in character (thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis) . . . the Hegelian conception approximates much more to the truth than others."[4] It can be inferred that he was influenced by Hegel's concept. Bose rejected the idea of unity at all costs and emphasized on the need to distinguish between the unity of action and inaction. He felt that if the right wing wanted complete surrender on the part of the left, it would be illogical for the latter to agree to it on the score of unity.[5] Here one may note a continuity in Bose's thought process because in his correspondence with Nehru prior to his resignation, he had stressed on the point that blind emphasis on unity was bound to have an injurious effect on the national struggle. Bose wrote to Nehru on March 28, 1939 that he wanted *Unity for action, not inaction*.[6]

It may be observed here that Bose imparted a new dimension to Hegelian thought by using it to justify not dictatorship but democracy in the Congress. Bose had consistently been in favour of democratization of the Congress, something he specially emphasized in 1938-39, and wanted to counter the perpetuation of the drift towards authoritarianism as perceived by him though the Forward Bloc. In his *Kabul Thesis,* Bose clearly noted, "The Gandhian movement today has become a victim of not only constitutionalism but also authoritarianism." In an editorial entitled "Our Critics", published in *Forward Bloc* on August 19, 1939, Bose said that specimens of Hitlers, super-Hitlers and budding Hitlers could be found in the rightist camp.[7] Hegelian concepts have been historically considered to be the inspirer of the Nazi and fascist doctrines and hence one of the main causes of the Second World War. According to Bertrand Russell, the disruption of democracy was a preoccupation with most philosophers from Hegel onwards and this found its practical expression in fascism. William Ebenstein, too, has observed that fascist ideas and principles are closely related to Hegel.[8] Bose, however, utilized the Hegelian dialectics to rationalize his rejection of the idea of false unity, which was bound to unleash an irresistible trend towards totalitarianism in the Congress and transform it into a fascist prototype.

The continuity in Bose's thought and ideas was also reflected in his emphasis on a solid broad based party organization like the Forward Bloc. Bose was always consistent on the point that one could never translate his principles and policies into reality except through a party. This as noted in the previous chapter was revealed in his criticism of Nehru who had no party to back him. Bose apparently calculated that after his resignation as Congress President his position as a political leader was bound to be greatly weakened but it could be bolstered through a party organization like the Forward Bloc. He felt that even in the event of a conflict with the Gandhian group, he would be able to act independently as he had his own party organization behind him.

The continuity in Bose's idea was also manifested in his advocacy of socialist objectives and principles through the Forward Bloc. In his *Kabul Thesis*, he said that the Forward Bloc stood for complete independence and uncompromising struggle against imperialism, the establishment of a thoroughly modern socialist state, scientific large scale production for the economic regeneration of the country, social ownership and control of both production and distribution, freedom for the individual in the matter of religious worship, equal rights for every individual, linguistic and cultural autonomy for all sections of the Indian community, and application of the principles of equality and social justice in building up a new order in free India.[9] One may note in Bose's *Kabul Thesis* that there were distinct reflections of Bose's Haripura address, where he had been emphatic in his advocacy of socialism in India.[10] Even while launching the Forward Bloc, Bose did not lose sight of the long-term perspective, that is, the urgency of a socialistic order in India in the post-independence period.

However, Bose was careful about the ordering of the priorities of struggle. He was categorical on the point that the immediate goal was to attain political independence for India. The issue of socialism was a secondary one. In this connection, Bose was very critical of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) and wrote in an incomplete article in 1940, entitled "Forward Bloc in Retrospect" that, "many of the CSP leaders have entertained the wrong notion that the present task of the party is merely to carry on Socialist propaganda. This is one of the principal reasons why the party has suffered a shipwreck." Dr. Sobhanlal Mukherjee testifies from personal experience that in a speech delivered at Hazra Park, Calcutta, immediately after the start of the Second World War, Bose lamented that the CSP leaders

were not with him.[11] It is clear from this that Bose did not endorse the CSP's idea of assigning primacy to the issue of socialism over India's political freedom.

In one respect, however, there was an apparent lack of clarity in Bose thought process. In his editorial "The Role of the Forward Bloc", published in *Forward Bloc* on August 12, 1939, he wrote that "The soil must be prepared for the growth of Marxist party."[12] This appears confusing because Bose had never projected himself as a Marxist. Prof. Sankari Prasad Basu is of the opinion that, if Bose really meant what he said, then he was at war with his original ideas. Myron Weiner also says that, Bose did not clearly define his leftism and spell out his ideas on Marxism and socialism. The Forward Bloc, thus, had a programme but not an ideology. Anil Roy contends that, Bose's aforesaid statement was made in the context of the CSP and implied that if the CSP wanted to prove its Marxist credentials it has to combat the rightist leadership for a genuine leftist movement against British imperialism.[13] Bose was admittedly misleading because in his aforesaid editorial, he had stated that, all radical anti-imperialist elements which might not be ready to join the CSP or the CPI should be organized on the basis of a common programme which was the key to the growth of a genuine Marxist party.[14] This evidently did not refer to the CSP but conveyed the fallacious impression that Bose had envisaged a party based on Marxist principles. At the same time, in view of his consistent rejection of Marxian principles throughout his political career, it may be surmised that he probably did not actually mean a Marxist party; it was just that his expression was faulty.

Shortly after the formation of the Forward Bloc, Bose's differences with the Gandhian group intensified and he was subsequently expelled from the Congress for three years on disciplinary grounds.

Expulsion of Bose from the Congress

The attitude adopted by Bose towards the Congress High Command, which culminated in his expulsion from the Congress, highlighted a continuity in his stand because Bose acted in consonance with his earlier consistent advocacy of the observance of democratic norms within the Congress. On July 4, 1939, two resolutions were passed in the Conference of the State Congress Committee debarring the Provincial Congress Committee from

making any criticism against the Congress ministers, Bose considered these measures undemocratic and organized an All India Protest Day on July 9, 1939. This was considered a serious breach of discipline and subsequently, through a resolution adopted at Wardha on August 12, 1939, Bose was debarred from holding any elective office under the Congress for three years. Gandhi himself as testified by him at a press statement on August 23, 1939,[15] drafted the resolution.

Bose's opposition to the Congress resolutions was on two specific grounds. Firstly, he discerned a distinct possibility of the Congress becoming an undemocratic organization. In a letter to Rajendra Prasad dated August 7, 1939, he expressed the misgiving that "the Congress resolutions intended to stifle the freedom of speech and expression and perpetuate the domination of the majority over the minority, the actual motive being to thwart constructive criticism in the name of discipline."[16] This indicates that Bose's basic orientation was democratic and he did not endorse the forcible imposition of resolutions to curb the expression of opinion by Congressmen.

Secondly, Bose could not reconcile himself to a position where any criticism of Congress ministers was forbidden. He had reservations about acceptance of office by Congress member after the 1937 elections. The very idea of acceptance of office by Congress members was anathema to Bose. As far back as March 4, 1936, he had written to Nehru that, his task as Congress President would be to prevent office acceptance by all possible means. However, after the provincial elections of 1937, the Congress formed ministries in the six provinces where it gained absolute majority. When Bose became Congress President in 1938, he warned in an article in August 1938, that office acceptance involved the danger of a drift towards constitutionalism and the creation of a mentality of complacency and inertia.[17] After the Tripuri Congress, he became more critical of the role played by the Congress ministers who had openly canvassed in favour of the Pant resolution.[18] Thus, he obviously thought that if all criticism against them were forcibly prohibited, it would encourage the reactionary elements within the Congress.

So far as the question of the disciplinary action against Bose was concerned, the Congress High Command evidently treated the matter as a prestige issue.[19] However, two factors need to be considered, that is, whether Bose was actually guilty of a breach of discipline and whether the severity of the penal action was justified. According to Sardul Singh Cavesheer, the Vice President of Bose's Forward Bloc, a mere protest against certain

Congress resolutions did not amount to a challenge to the authority of the Congress. Accordingly a resolution did not become sacrosanct just because it was passed by the majority.[20] The Congress High Command in general and Gandhi in particular, however, suspected that Bose was contemplating a rebellion against the Congress. From the testimony of Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, it is known that, ever since Bose's reelection, Gandhiji has become deeply suspicious of Bose.[21] Though Gandhi did not explicitly say so, yet his intransigent attitude and personal initiative in expelling Bose from the Congress creates the impression that he did not want to accommodate Bose within his own scheme of things. Tagore telegraphed to Gandhi on December 20, 1939, urging him to withdraw the disciplinary measure against Bose, Gandhi was unshakable in his resolve. In his reply on December 22, 1939 Gandhi wrote that Tagore should advise Bose to submit to discipline if the measures were to be withdrawn.[22] There is reason to believe that Gandhi wanted to teach Bose a lesson as evident from his letter to C.F. Andrews on January 15, 1940, where he said that "Subhas is behaving like a spoilt child of the family. The only way to make up with him is to open his eyes."[23] Leading Congressmen like Maulana Azad were not in favour of any extreme penal action. Azad wrote to Nehru on August 17, 1939, "In my opinion, the attitude of Subhas Babu was wrong and it was necessary for the working Committee to express its opinion. But I had suggested not to show too much strictness on this occasion."[24] But Gandhi was totally inflexible in his determination to remove Bose from the Congress. Gandhi's word was the ultimate one and Bose was therefore, barred from playing any important role in the Congress. This did not dampen Bose's ardour and he energetically took up the task of propagating his policies and programmes through the medium of the Forward Bloc.

Bose as the Leader of the Forward Bloc

After his expulsion from the Congress, Bose endeavoured to give a concrete shape to his political objectives and strategies through the Forward Bloc. Actually, as noted earlier, the creation of the Forward Bloc itself amounted to giving a practical shape to his political views. To him, the concept of a party was important because it was only through a party organization that, political objectives could be carried out.[25] It was through the Forward Bloc that, he hoped to pursue his socialistic goals by promoting

a consolidation of the leftist forces. He also wished to raise mass consciousness regarding the urgency of an immediate anti imperialist movement so that he could push through, his plan of serving the government with an ultimatum. Moreover he wished to promote his views on bringing about communal unity.

Left Consolidation

In June 1939, Bose formed the Left Consolidation Committee (LCC), which was meant to function as the organ of the entire left. However, there were serious dissensions among the leftist groups right from the beginning. It received a serious setback in the early stage, with the withdrawal of M.N. Roy's League of Radical Congressmen (LRC) following Bose's decision to observe the all India Protest Day mentioned earlier. Bose considered this as an act of betrayal of the leftist cause because M.N. Roy had joined the LCC along with the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the CSP. His decision to dissociate himself from the LCC was a complete reversal of his original position as Roy had earlier advised Bose during the Tripuri Congress crisis to form his Working Committee independently of Gandhi and provide a leftist alternative to Gandhian leadership. Roy adopted what appeared to be a distinctly rightist posture, which ended his rapport with Bose. Amitava Chandra observes that Roy was guided more by realism than idealism because he realized that participation in the observance of the Protest Day would have invited penal action against himself and his party. He also did not desire any break with the Congress and thus decided to back out. This, however, was not the only reason. Roy totally differed from Bose in his idea of using the international situation to India's advantage and this created a gulf between them.[26]

In October 1939, the CSP too announced that it would act on its own in the future and not follow the directives of the LCC later. In December 1939, a serious breach occurred between the Forward Bloc and the National Front, which was the official organ of the Communist Party. Bose alleged that, "The National Front leaders wanted to use the platform of the LCC for popularizing their own organization while carrying on reprehensible propaganda both secret and open, against the component unit of the Committee."[27] From the testimony of Bose, it is further known that when disciplinary action was taken against Bose, who was then the President of

the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee (BPCC), the National Front joined in the protest by the leftist members of the BPCC against the Congress directive. But when the All India Congress Committee (AICC) threatened disciplinary action against the BPCC, the National Front began to waver in its resolve. When the BPCC, was suspended by the AJCC, the National Front parted company with the leftists and declared openly that they would not sever their connection with the AICC.[28] After this break the possibility of left consolidation was almost nil.

The main reason behind the failure of left consolidation was that the leftist partners of the LCC did not subscribe to Bose's emphasis on the desirability of occasional splits so far as the Congress was concerned, as against the idea of unity at all cost. They were evidently not confident of being able to provide an alternative to Gandhian leadership. The communists in particular, disliked the idea of the Forward Bloc.[29]

Secondly, Bose himself was partly responsible for the failure of left consolidation because he concentrated solely on the need to create a broad based anti-imperialist front through left unity without going into the basic issue of who was a genuine leftist. Soumyendra Nath Tagore, who founded the Communist League of India on August 1, 1934, met Bose personally at his residence and tried to impress on him the urgency of identifying the genuine leftists without which left consolidation would become an incongruous amalgam of diverse political forces. He further warned Bose in advance that many leftist elements would desert him. But Bose did not agree with Tagore who kept away from the LCC.[30]

Following the collapse of the LCC, Bose became conscious of the need to identify the true leftists as evident from his editorial entitled "Our Critics" in the *Forward Bloc* published on August 19, 1939, where he stated that "To talk of leftism and act as a rightist, to seek to overthrow Gandhism by words and then succumb to the first rightist rebuke, are perhaps brilliant examples of opportunism."[31]

Professor Gautam Chattopadhyay is of the opinion that Bose might have been able to carry the party of M.N. Roy with him if he had taken some more personal initiative.[32] This does not appear correct because at that point of time, Bose's differences with M.N. Roy were very wide. Roy entirely supported Britain in the Second World War and stated on September 6, 1939, that, "All freedom loving people will congratulate the British government on the decision, even though belated, to put an end to Hitlerism."[33] This was

directly in conflict with Bose's idea of taking advantage of England's difficulties during the Second World War. The failure of the LCC brings out a basic flaw in Bose's understanding of the political situation in India. It also is an indication of his optimistic nature. His strategies were grounded in his belief in and hope of support from people he considered like-minded but the political reality was something else. To an extent, his idea of armed struggle from outside was also based on similar beliefs, but Hitler's attitude and the failure of the Indian masses to start simultaneous uprising in India also belied his hopes.

Following the failure of left consolidation, Bose zealously propagated his idea of struggle against British imperialism through the organization of the Forward Bloc to awaken his countrymen and convince them about the need to resume the struggle with immediate effect.

Urgency of the Anti-imperialist Struggle

Bose tried to arouse a countrywide consciousness about the absolute urgency of commencing a new phase of the national struggle, which would culminate in presenting a time-based ultimatum to the British government. This is an issue, which he had raised in 1938 and further at Tripuri in 1939. This was in consonance with his view that every opportunity had to be utilized for the purpose of the national struggle. He felt that the time was propitious for striking at the very root of British imperialism because of the international situation. He toured India extensively with this purpose. While addressing a meeting at Patna on August 29, 1939, Bose came to know about the German decision to attack Danzig, which confirmed his premonition about the imminence of war.[34] Shortly afterwards he came to know about the outbreak of war on September 3, 1939, while addressing a meeting in Madras. Bose felt that this was India's golden oportunity.[35] His subsequent speeches and writings reflected first of all, a feeling of restlessness emanating from the urge to resume the struggle immediately, and secondly, the readiness to dissolve his differences with the right wing for the purpose of providing united leadership to the nation at a crucial juncture of her history. Bose believed that England's difficulty was India's opportunity and believed that the country was ready to respond positively if the Congress was prepared to give them the lead.[36] In an editorial entitled "The Correct Line", published in the *Forward Bloc* on December 23, 1939, he said, "In Real *Politik*, there

can be no such thing as marking time. One has to more either forward or backward."[37] At the All India anti-Compromise Conference organized by the Forward Bloc at Ramgarh on March 19, 1940, Bose said that "The country eagerly awaits a clear and unequivocal declaration from the Congress Working Committee that the door has finally been banged on all talks of a compromise with imperialism."[38] Bose urged immediate and decisive action in all his speeches and writings and constantly reminded his countrymen that India's freedom was within her reach. In an editorial, "The Caravan marches", in *Forward Bloc* on April 13, 1940, Bose wrote, "The hour of deliverance is at hand. We have only to do our duty and pay the price". In another editorial entitled "Wake up India", published in the *Forward Bloc* on May 11, 1940, Bose wrote, "How can we save our country from this political rut, utilize the international crisis to India's advantage and freedom for ourselves? This is the supreme problem of the hour. As every day passes, one feels like biting his fingers in helpless agony. Can nothing be done to save India even at this late hour?" In an editorial entitled "Act Quickly", published in *the Forward Bloc* on May 18, 1940, Bose observed that "The time at our disposal is exceedingly short and we shall have to act quickly if we are to act at all."[39]

A new dimension, which can be perceived in Bose's political thought in this period, was his idea of a provisional national government. In a statement issued from Kurseong on June 8, 1940, Bose urged Hindus and Muslims to jointly put forward their demand for an immediate transfer of power to a provisional national government, which should be vested with full sovereign powers. Bose ultimately realized the idea of a provisional government after his departure from India when he became the head of the provisional Azad Hind Government which was inaugurated on October 21, 1943.[40] He also inspired his countrymen with a new slogan, "All power to the Indian people here and now", at the All India Forward Bloc Conference at Nagpur on June 18, 1940.[41] From Bose's utterances and writings, it appears that he gave the call for struggle out of a firm conviction about its success. He was certain that British imperialism was bound to be weakened by the war and any procrastination at this stage would allow it the necessary time for recuperation. Bose probably believed that in 1939 the scenario was qualitatively different from the time that the calls for the non cooperation and civil disobedience movements were given since the international situation was not favourable to India.

Bose was also extremely vocal on the need for unity. He wrote in an editorial in the *Forward Bloc* on August 26, 1939, that if the Congress adopted a bold policy, he and his followers would sink all differences with them, be humble camp followers and gladly surrender all the posts, which the leftists had been occupying.[42] In the course of a speech at Muzaffarpur on August 26, 1939, he made the point that if Russia and Germany could conclude a Non-Aggression Pact, there was no reason why the left and right wings of the Congress could not unite on a common platform.[43] In an editorial entitled "Looking Back" published in the *Forward Bloc* on November 4, 1939, Bose said that, the objective of the Forward Bloc was to ensure the resumption of the national struggle in the name of the Congress.[44]

All this clearly indicates that Bose was not a diehard rebel against the Congress and was ready to cooperate with it if it gave the call for immediate struggle. His readiness to resume the struggle in the name of the Congress shows that his loyalty to the Congress remained unshaken. He was prepared to rebel only if the Congress swerved from the path of struggle, which he advocated and opted for compromise. Bose began to criticize the Congress vigorously when despite his repeated appeals; it refused to resume the struggle. He then sharply criticised the right wing leadership and thought in terms of a leftist alternative to Gandhism. He observed in an editorial in *the Forward Bloc* on February 10, 1940, "Gandhiji wants to win *swaraj* without a fight". In yet another editorial on April 13, 1940, he said that, "The Supreme test is taking place now ... Out of this ordeal, leftism will emerge triumphant. The overthrow of rightism will mean the defeat of moderatism, reaction and compromise."[45] However, even at this stage, Bose hoped that the Congress might be converted to what he considered the leftist viewpoint. He declared in an editorial in the *Forward Bloc* dated May 11, 1940 "Let the Supreme executive of the Congress call upon the nation to resume the struggle. We shall then fall in line with them in that great and noble task."[46] When in November 1940, Gandhi finally decided to launch his civil disobedience campaign, Bose offered him his unconditional cooperation in a letter dated December 12, 1940, and added that his grievance against the Congress High Command would not stand in the way and blind him to the larger issues. Gandhi declared individual *satyagraha* with Vinoba Bhave, a very disciplined Gandhian as the first *statyagrahi*. It was Gandhi's weakest movement having minimum impact and although a large number of Congress supporters offered him his cooperation he himself was not very sure about the prospect of

success of the movement.[47] Gandhi however was still intransigent and declined his offer in a letter on December 29, 1940, in which he said, "Till one of us is converted to the other's view, we must sail in different boats, though their destination may appear but only appear to be the same.[48] Bose questioned Gandhi in another letter dated January 10, 1941, whether Gandhi meant that their political goals were different.[49] Gandhi did not answer Bose's letter and hence the exact implication of his statement cannot be ascertained, but it is evident that unlike Bose who was optimistic about resolving his differences with Gandhi, Gandhi did not envisage any possibility of working in conjunction with Bose.

Same questions need consideration in this respect. Firstly, did Gandhi refuse to accept Bose's offer for cooperation because he considered him a rebel? Bose had met Gandhi at Wardha in June 1940, which happened to be his last meeting with him, where he appealed to him to launch a campaign of passive resistance. However, to quote Bose's own testimony, Gandhi was of the opinion that the country was not prepared for a fight and any attempt to precipitate it, would do more harm than good to India.[50] One of the main points of difference between Gandhi and Bose was regarding the exact timing of the struggle.

Gandhi was convinced that the opportune moment had not yet arrived for launching the struggle and its premature commencement was bound to be harmful to the national cause. Nathalal Parikh who was close to Bose, has recorded that during his last meeting with Bose, Gandhi had said, "Subhas, you are keen on launching mass movement. You are terribly emotional. I am an old man now and must not do anything in haste... Why do you think we cannot have better opportunities later on? I am sure we will have many opportunities. Both politically and morally I feel we should not be hasty in launching the movement at the present juncture. My conscience tells me to wait for better times. Whether England wins or loses this war, she will be weakened by it, she will not have the strength to shoulder the responsibilities of administering the country, and with some slight effort on our part, she will have no alternative but recognize India's independence. You have the qualities of a great leader and if your conscience tells you that this is the best time for striking out, go ahead and do your best. But my advice to you is not to be hasty."[51]

Gandhi appears to have refused Bose's call to start the struggle out of logistical rather than personal reasons. His attitude towards Bose however,

appears to have softened somewhat as evident from his remark that "I have the greatest admiration for you... your sincerity is transparent, your spirit of self-sacrifice and suffering cannot be surpassed by anybody, but I would like these qualities to be used at a more opportune moment."[52] It may be surmised from this that Gandhi might have thought in terms of utilizing Bose's services in the future. It would therefore, be incorrect to say that Gandhi had rejected Bose for all times.

The second issue is whether Gandhi did a disservice to India by refusing to respond to Bose at the time. According to one viewpoint, Gandhi was more realistic than Bose, who was rash and impulsive and who never had the necessary mass base for the leadership of a nationwide struggle. Dr. Chittabrata Palit says that Gandhi did not view Bose as a mass leader because his influence was confined to the urban middle class.[53] Dr. Nemai Sadhan Basu has rightly remarked that at that, point of time, any alternative to Gandhian leadership was unthinkable to the millions who made up India.[54] Moreover, it is also a moot point whether Bose's judgment about the readiness of the country for struggle was correct. Dr. Pratap Chandra Chunder feels that, Gandhi was not convinced like Bose that the moment for struggle had arrived.[55]

Opposed to this viewpoint, is the opinion of some scholars and revolutionaries who believe that if Gandhi had given the call for the Quit India struggle in 1940, instead of 1942 India's freedom would have been expedited. Professor Prasanta Kumar Ghosh firmly believes that, if Gandhi had heeded Bose's call, a massive mass movement would have developed in India. Helena Dutta, a revolutionary of the Sri Sangha group, is of the view that if Bose's call had been heeded in 1940, the Quit India movement launched by Gandhi in August 1942 would have occurred much earlier.[56] Since the point is hypothetical, no conclusive verdict can be given, but with hindsight it may be said that the international situation was favourable to India in 1940 and an all-India movement, had it been launched would have a fair chance of success.

In this connection, it is necessary to consider the view of Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose that an understanding between Gandhi and Bose was necessary at that point of time, but Gandhi was responsible for circumventing it and was thus guilty of a historic crime. Dr. Bose is of the view that, Gandhi did not realize the simple truth that independence could never be attained by postponing the struggle, on the plea that the country was not prepared.[57] It may be

argued that if Gandhi had indicated to Bose, a possible deadline for launching the struggle, he may have been convinced, but Gandhi's continuous emphasis on the unpreparedness of his countrymen, made Bose impatient and he refused to wait any longer. Had Gandhi been move direct and specific, he may have been able to win the allegiance of Bose though it is doubtful whether the understanding would have lasted. This is because of the fact that though Bose publicly declared that he envisaged a non-violent struggle,[58] yet he secretly explored possibilities of an armed confrontation with British imperialism. He toured U.P. along with the noted revolutionary Trailokya Nath Chakravarti, and made secret arrangements for an armed revolt through the Anushilan Samiti. Bose contributed Rs. 10,000 for the purpose of procuring arms from Delhi through Sushil Bhattacharya. Efforts were also made by Bose to incite a spirit of rebellion in the armed forces.[59] It follows from this that Bose had begun to think in terms of an armed struggle. Had Gandhi responded to Bose's call, it is possible that Bose would have tried to take the movement out of the bounds of non-violence and in that case, his temporary understanding with Gandhi would have collapsed. What is evident is that he was becoming increasingly radical in his outlook and there was much more behind his idea of offering a leftist alternative to the Congress right wing.

During his campaign on behalf of the Forward Bloc, Bose repeatedly stressed the need for communal unity because in the event of a showdown with British imperialism it was imperative to have joint action by the two major communities. Bose's attitude and approach to the communal problem during this period is of particular significance and needs to be judged at the separate levels of thought and action.

Bose on Communal Unity

Bose realized the urgency of the need to solve the communal problem for the triumph of the national struggle. His conception of communal unity was based on his conviction that the two main communities had many common interests. The British government, he believed, was determined to separate them through its policy of divide and rule. In a private conversation, Bose expressed the view that communalism would not go so long as the British remained in India.[61] It was also its policy to create the impression that India was not fit for Swaraj since the Hindus and Muslims were locked

in perpetual conflict.[62] Thus, if the two communities joined hands, they could successfully counter the divide and rule policy of the British. Here, Bose drew from historical examples like the revolt of the Indian sepoys in 1857 where Hindus and Muslims fought together.[63]

Bose also sought to dispel all fear from the minds of the Muslims regarding the possibility of Hindu domination by explaining to the Muslims, the real meaning of *Swaraj*. Speaking at Bhagalpur on February 2, 1940, he said that '*Swaraj*' did not mean the *raj* of one community over the other. Thus, the Muslims had no reason to fear that "their rights and aspirations would be crushed as they would have the same rights and privileges as the others."[64] Bose felt that the ideal of *Swaraj* for the masses, which was a slogan with economic undertones, would make more sense to the Muslims who were poorer than the Hindus and were more concerned about the redressal of their economic grievances.

Bose laid particular emphasis on the development of a spirit of nationalism and a "revolutionary mentality" for the eradication of communalism. He wrote in an article, "Towards Communal Unity", dated February 24, 1940, and published in the *Forward Bloc,*" When people become comrades in arms in the struggle for liberty, a new outlook, a new perspective and a new vision will develop. Under the present circumstances, it appears well nigh impossible to destroy the canker of communalism and foster all round nationalism in our public life. But how easy our task will become once we develop a revolutionary mentality on a nation wide scale . . . Communalism will go only when the communal mentality goes."[65] Bose's obvious expectation was that an appeal to nationalistic sentiment would bring the Hindus and Muslims together. However, the communal situation was much more complex. The Muslim League adopted the resolution on Pakistan at the Lahore session of the Muslim League in 1940, on the basis of the two-nation theory. Bose was a strong opponent of the idea of Pakistan as evident from his statement in his earlier book, *The Indian Struggle* that "Pakistan is of course a fantastic plan and an unpractical proposition. India is geographically, historically, culturally, politically and economically an indivisible unit. Secondly, in most parts of India, Hindus and Muslims are so mixed up that it is not possible to separate them. Thirdly, if Muslim states were forcibly set up, new minority problems would be created in these states, which would present new difficulties. Fourthly, unless Hindus and Muslims join hands and fight the British they cannot liberate themselves and their unity is possible only on the basis of a free and undivided India."[66]

Bose was firmly committed to the idea of a united India and a staunchly opposed the partition of the country on a religious basis. He had made abortive attempts to negotiate with Jinnah while he was President of the Congress and continued his efforts in this area as leader of the Forward Bloc. From a letter written by Raghunandan Saran, (Nehru's close confidant) to Nehru on October 14, 1939, it is known that, Bose reportedly said that, he alone knew how to deal successfully with Jinnah.[67] He met Jinnah in 1940, and offered him the prime ministership of Free India But Jinnah, as Bose noted, was then obsessed with the idea of Pakistan, which he hoped to make to into a reality with the help of the British.[68] It appears from the testimony of Professor Samar Guha, that Bose's personal relations with Jinnah were very cordial,[69] but it did not help to deflect Jinnah from his resolve to have Pakistan.

In pursuit of his goal of communal unity, Bose also adopted a flexible and open-minded attitude towards the communal organizations of Bengal.[70] He did not consider communal organizations as pernicious forces, which had to be discarded at all costs. Thus, in an editorial entitled "Congress and communal Organizations", published in Forward Bloc on May 4, 1940, Bose recalled that in the past, prominent leaders of the Congress had led communal organizations like the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League. However, as the organizations became more communal, the Congress debarred their members from the membership of any elective committee in the Congress.[71] It appears from this, that Bose perhaps did not quite approve of the Congress policy of closing its doors to important political personalities who were communal. By this, it isolated itself in a way and further, increased the fervour of there leaders.

In 1939, the Calcutta Municipal Amendment Act was passed which substituted the principle of joint electorate with separate electorates despite opposition from the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha. Bose who was consistently in favour of joint electorates, found himself in agreement with the stand of the Hindu Mahasabha. It was clear to Bose that the Municipal Amendment Act was intended to weaken the Hindus in the Corporation and to counter this, he had to forge an electoral alliance with the Hindu Mahasabha. At this point of time, Bose and Shyamaprasad Mukherjee the prominent leader of the Hindu Mahasabha came closer to each other. Bose realized the need for alliance formation with contending parties in order to strengthen his position in the Calcutta Corporation and formed an alliance

with the Hindu Mahasabha.[72] According to the terms of the agreement, six members from the Hindu Mahasabha nominated by that body, would be co-opted as members of the Congress Corporation Election Board with one of them as its Secretary. The Corporation election would be conducted by the board and a selection committee consisting of Bose, his brother Sarat Chandra Bose, Rajendra Chandra Deb and three nominees of the Hindu Mahasabha, would be formed to select the candidates.

The agreement, however, did not last long, firstly because it was purely an electoral arrangement between two parties who had a common interest in eliminating the influence of the Europeans in the Corporation. Secondly, the pact was inherently fragile and incapable of providing permanent unity because the ideological base of the Hindu Mahasabha was very different from Bose's beliefs. Bose, however, justified his decision to align with the Hindu Mahasabha in an editorial in the *Forward Bloc* on March 30, 1940, stating that, though the agreement did not last long, its foundation were sound and there were genuine nationalist elements in the Hindu Mahasabha who had made the agreement possible. It had collapsed because it was sabotaged by diehard elements in the Hindu mahasabha.[73] According to Prof. Bidyut Charavarti, the Hindu Mahasabha's stand was opportunistic and Bose's agreement with it alienated the Muslim league.[74] But it is interesting to note that immediately after the collapse of his agreement with the Hindu Mahasabha, Bose succeeded in concluding a pact with the Muslim League on April 17, 1940.

According to it, three seats would be allotted to Bose's group in the Corporation and the remaining two would go to the Muslim League. Bose considered this a great achievement "not in its actuality but in its potentiality, as great achievements are often born out of small beginnings."[75] His logic was that if Hindus and Muslims could be united in the narrow sphere of municipal administration, it would set the stage for Hindu-Muslim unity at the national level. Bose's decision to align with the Muslim league came in for a lot of harsh criticism from the established newspapers and journals of the time, particularly the *Forward* that was the organ of the official Congress. *The Forward* accused Bose of opportunism. The well-known Modern *Review*, which generally projected a balanced viewpoint, alleged that Bose had walked into the parlour of the Muslim League.[76]

Objectively speaking, the pact with the Muslim League was as fragile as the pact with the Hindu Mahasabha and there was little chance of creating

unity at the national level. In view of the allegation of opportunism levelled against Bose by the *Forward*, it must be said in his defence that he followed the tradition of the Bengal Pact forged by C.R. Das who believed in concessional arrangements with pacts, which recognized the distinctive identity of Hindus and Muslims. Bose referred to C.R. Das during his speech at Albert Hall on June 22, 1940, in which he said, "Deshbandhu wanted a real permanent unity among the Hindus and Muslims and that was why he did not fight shy entering into a pact with the Muslims."[77] Moreover, no other leader had hitherto been able to effect an agreement with the Muslim League even at the local level. Finally, he was actually successful in accomplishing his objective of eliminating the influence of the Europeans in the Corporation. John Herbert, the Governor of Bengal, wrote to the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow on April 22, 1940, that, "The failure to achieve an agreement with the Muslim league, not only removed the Europeans from the power nucleus of the Calcutta civic administration, but also ensured the right of Subhas Bose to keep fingers on some of the resources of the Corporation."[78] Thus, while Bose did not secure any lasting success in solving the communal problem, there were some peripheral gains.

Bose's last organized effort in this period to bring about communal unity was through the Holwell monument agitation of July 1940. Bose considered the monument, a deliberate creation of the British, built for blackening the name of Sirajudaulla, the last *Nawab* of Bengal. Sirajudaulla was alleged to have suffocated to 123 British prisoners to death, in a dungeon on June 20, 1956. John Holwell, one of the few survivors, subsequently circulated the story that they were suffocated in a black hole and it came to be known as the "Black hole tragedy". This version later on came to be contradicted by many scholars and historicans.[79] To Bose, the monument was "an emblem of India's subjection and a slur on the dignity of the nation."[80] He announced that July 3, 1940 would be celebrated as 'Sirajudaulla day'. Bose's appeal created widespread commotion and his subsequent arrest on July 2, 1940, triggered off joint protest by Hindus and Muslims. About 250 members of the Bengal provincial Muslim Students League demonstrated before the residence of Fazlul Huq. Prime Minister of Bengal, demanding the immediate demolition of the monument.[81] A meeting was organized at Albert Hall under the auspices of the Muslim Students League on July 13, 1940 where a resolution was adopted in favour of commencing a *satyagraha* movement on July 16, 1940.[82] Sources indicate that there was large scale Muslim

participation in the agitation. Reginald Coupland testifies that, a large section of Muslim students were involved in the movement and on July 22, a massive demonstration in front of Islamia College was forcibly broken up, which created such public indignation that on July 23, 1940, the Premier had to declare that the monument would be removed. Prof. Samar Guha has testified that Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman, who later on became the architect of Bangladesh, and who was a young students leader at that time, personally told him that, many Muslims joined the movement. Captain Sushil Khastagir of the Secret Service Department of the Azad Hind Government has testified that the students of Hooghly Mohsin College joined the movement.[83] The view held by an analyst Pronab Kumar Chatterjee is that, the Holwell monument agitation was a tame affair, appears incorrect in view of the spontaneous Muslim support that it evoked. Chatterjee however admits elsewhere that while the agitation never assumed the character of a mass movement, it caused anxious moments in government circles. Abul Mansur Ahmed, a nationalist Muslim who was not affiliated to the Muslim League, testifies to the tremendous impact of the agitation. The *Dainik Krishak*, a noted daily of the nationalist Muslims, projected Sirajudaulla as a symbol of Bengali nationalism and came out in support of Bose. Dr. G.L. Adhya observes that Bose's main objective was to do something, which would create an impact on the people, and here he was successful in view of the favourable Muslim response to the agitation. Dipesh Roy concludes that the Holwell monument agitation dealt a great blow on the British policy of divide and rule which alarmed the government and was the main reason behind Bose's arrest. It was the only successful agitation of the time where Hindus and Muslims joined hands.[84] It may be observed that of all the efforts made by Bose to achieve communal unity in India, the Holwell monument agitation was the most successful in terms of tangible results, though its impact was confined to the regional level. Bose evidently wanted to utilize all available opportunities to forge communal unity, because he felt that even if it succeeded at the regional level, it could serve as a stepping-stone for unity at the national level.

According to Prof. Amalendu De, Bose's efforts to secure communal unity in India failed because he could not translate his ideas into reality.[85] This view is only partially correct because though Bose's real success in creating communal unity came in the Indian National Army (INA) phase, he achieved it to a degree for a brief period through the Holwell monument

agitation, which had a direct impact on his efforts to foster unity during the INA phase. It convinced him about the necessity to evoke common historical memories, which could provide a sure basis of nationhood. Bose visited the mausoleum of Bahadur Shah Zaffar, the last Mughal emperor at Rangoon on September 26, 1943, and delivered a speech saying, "We cherish the memory of Bahadur Shah because he was the man under whose flag, fought Indians from all provinces, Indians professing different religious faiths, the man under whose sacred flag, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs fought." In a speech at Singapore on October 2, 1943, he described Sirajudaulla, who was the symbol of the Holwell monument agitation, as the last independent King of Bengal. The proclamation of the Azad Hind Government issued on October 21, 1943, recognized the heroism of prominent Muslim figures of Indian history like Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan, etc.[86]

Shortly after the Holwell monument agitation, Bose took the fateful decision to escape from India. A number of persons are said to have influenced him in taking this extreme step. The communist leader, Gopal Haldar, reportedly advised Base to emulate the Czech leader Misery and escape from India.[87] The reputed labour leader Niharendu Dutta Mazumdar claims to have impressed Bose during his tour of Lucknow and Nagpur in 1940, with the idea of fleeing the country like Sun Yat Sen of China.[88] Naren Sen of the Anushilan Samiti is also said to have urged Bose to make his final bid from outside India.[89] Veer Savarkar, the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, also made a significant impression on Bose who met him at Bombay in 1940. Savarkar reportedly ridiculed Bose's idea of the Holwell monument agitation, which to him, would be simply a waste of energy. If Bose really wanted to drive out the British, then he should slip away from India, secure help from the enemies of the British and challenge the British in armed conflict. Uma Mukherjee notes that, Bose's conversation with Savarkar toned up his drooping spirit and gave a definite direction to his wandering mind. She also testifies that the noted revolutionary Hem Chandra Ghosh, gave Bose the same advice as Savarkar and reportedly told him on July 2, 1940 at Presidency jail that, "Either you will have to rot in jail or leave the country."[90] Though Bose has nowhere referred to Savarkar's advice in *The Indian Struggle*, yet it is possible that it had an impact on his mind as proved by his eventual escape from India.

Bose escaped from house arrest on December 16, 1941, with the object of liberating India through armed struggle from outside. He initially proceeded

to Kabul, from where he tried to contact Soviet Russia, failing which he proceeded to Germany where he set up the Indian Legion, which was intended to be the army of free India. Bose contacted some important officials at the German Foreign Office. He also met Hitler once but failed to secure from him a guarantee of German assistance for Indian independence. Meanwhile, the Indian revolutionary, Rashbihari Bose, who had set up the Indian Independence League in East Asia contacted Bose and asked him to come to Japan and assume command over the League. Bose calculated that given the non-committal attitude of Hitler, and the changing war situation, there was very little prospect of success in Germany, and looked forward to Japan. After a perilous submarine journey, he reached Tokyo and on October 21, 1943, the Provisional Azad Hind government was inaugurated with Bose as its head. Bose assumed charge of the Indian National Army and transformed it into a fighting force. The INA set its foot on Indian soil and hoisted the tricolour flag, at Kohima and Manipur in 1944, but the unexpected arrival of the monsoon and other adverse circumstances forced it to retreat. However, the trial of the INA soldiers at Red Fort, Delhi, stirred a nation-wide popular upsurge and created a spirit of revolt in the armed forces which greatly disturbed the British imperialist rulers and played an indirect role in precipitating the transfer of power which occurred in 1947. The events after Bose's departure from India do not fall within the purview of the present study.[91] However, his decision to escape from India needs to be critically examined.

Bose's Decision to Escape

Bose's decision to escape from India has been interpreted by scholars and revolutionaries in three different ways. According to the communist viewpoint, his decision to collude with the axis powers was a grievous mistake. His ideological line was totally wrong, though he acted out of patriotic motives and was instrumental in making an indirect contribution to India's freedom. Opposed to this, is the view championed by scholars, intellectuals and revolutionaries, that Bose had no other alternative but to escape from India and this enabled him to rise to the stature of Netaji as the Commander of the Indian National Army through which he decisively expedited India's freedom. Moreover, a section of Bengali intellectuals and revolutionaries trace a direct connection between Bose's escape from India

and Gandhi's launching of the Quit India struggle in August 1942 and suggest that Bose's escape had a significant effect on Gandhi. Thirdly, there is the negative view held by some scholars and revolutionaries that Bose was undoubtedly a patriot but could make no contribution to India's national movement through his INA which was completely ineffectual. Thus, his decision to escape from India was most injudicious.

The Communist Response to Bose

The communist viewpoint was originally negative and inimical towards Bose. Initially the Communists castigated Bose as a quisling, a traitor, and a paid agent of the fascists.[92] Subsequently, it underwent a partial change and presently there are different shades of opinion among the communists regarding Bose's decision to collude with the axis powers. The general trend of analysis today is that Bose's INA made an indirect contribution to India's freedom, but his historical perception of the international situation was profoundly at fault and his attempt to liberate India with the help of the axis powers, was fraught with serious dangers. Mr. Jyoti Basu has recently stated that, Bose would never have been a puppet in the hands of the fascist forces and would have fought against the Japanese had they shown any intention of dominating India. The Communist Party, he acknowledged, had erred in its judgment of Bose. Professor Gautam Chattopadhyay, however, maintains that though Bose was never a fascist and the INA trials, which inspired a spirit of revolt in the British Indian Army, acted as a catalytic agent behind the nationwide post-war upsurge in India, but adds that Bose did not realize that, the axis powers aspired for world domination. Nationalists, like Aung Sang of Burma and Sukarno of Indonesia, were totally disillusioned with the axis powers after initially lining up with them and switched over to the anti-fascist camp. Ho Chi Minn, the leader of Vietnam, did not commit this mistake. Suniti Kumar Ghosh, the noted communist scholar, argues in the same vein, that Bose was at no time, an apologist for fascism but even if the axis powers had triumphed, his mission to liberate India would not have succeeded. His optimism that he would be able to resist a new aggressor like Germany or Japan once the INA set its foot on Indian soil was misplaced. Sudhi Pradhan opines that, Bose did not realize that Hitler never wanted Britain to lose India.[93] However, there are serious fallacies in this kind of thinking. Firstly, most Communist writers assume that if Bose had succeeded

with the help of Germany or Japan, these countries would not have liberated India and it would have faced a different kind of domination. But it must be pointed out that what would have happened if the Japanese had come to India, is a hypothetical question to which, no definite answer can be given. Moreover, these writers have come to their conclusions after examining the issue in the light of the condition of the areas, which were liberated by Japan. Bose did not have the advantage of this hindsight and was acting on the principle that an enemy's enemy could be a friend.

Secondly, Bose's ideological stance in soliciting help from powers like Japan and Germany which were self-aggrandizing and far from socialistic, has been criticized. But Bose played the role of a catalyst in the winning of India's freedom through his INA as most communist scholars now admit, and since success or failure in history is judged by the end result (which in Bose's case was very positive) the point at issue is, how much value should be attached to the ideological factor in a liberation struggle?

Thirdly, the communist scholars have totally ignored the fact that while Hitler promoted the idea of racial superiority and Aryan purity towards the later stages of the Second World War in 1945, he repented his mistake in not raising the standard of revolt in countries opposed to the British. This is something that he confided to Martin Bovmann in the Reich Chancellory.[94] It may be surmised from this, that Hitler blamed himself for not having helped Bose who wanted to raise an independent Indian army in Germany with Hitler's help for an armed assault on British imperialism. More research on the attitude of the axis powers towards India is required for a proper assessment of the subject.

The Negative Response to Bose

A group of scholars and revolutionaries, who are not necessarily communist, recognize Bose as a patriot but do not attach any significance to the INA upsurge and its repercussions. According to them, Bose was extremely rash and indiscreet in his decision to leave India and he would have made a much greater contribution had he stayed in India. S. Gopal for instance, describes Bose as a born failure. Arun Prakash Chatterjee is of the opinion that, Bose made a grave error in fleeing the country and running into the embrace of the fascists. He feels that there is no doubt about Bose's

patriotism but patriotism is bound to suffer if it is rash and ignores historical perspectives. Kamala Dasgupta, a veteran revolutionary of the Jugantar group, is of the view that, though the freedom of his country was uppermost in Bose's mind, he ruled out the possibility of Japanese domination of India, which he would have been powerless to resist. Nirad Chandra Chowdhury has recognized Bose's patriotism in eloquent terms by describing him as one among the six greatest Bengalis (in his opinion). However, he has completely debunked the historical role of the INA saying that it did not fight any battle. According to A.M. Nair, who was close to Bose in the INA, "I respect Subhas and I regard him as a great Indian but his greatest mistake was to think that he could secure independence by means of an invasion. Failure was writ large on it even before it was contemplated."[95] This view is akin to the communist one with the difference that it does not attach any importance to the INA. The communist viewpoint recognizes the significant role played by the INA, as a fact of history. On the other hand, the negative viewpoint, by ignoring the INA, marginalizes a significant landmark in the history of India's freedom struggle, and is therefore historically unsound. It is also completely wrong to suggest that the INA did not fight any battle.[96]

Here too, it can be said that success or failure of a historical personality cannot always be judged on the basis of immediate results. Every movement has two aspects, immediate and ultimate. The INA was not merely a military venture. It symbolized the translation of much of Bose's vision, for instance, communal unity, into action. Despite his sincere efforts, he did not achieve lasting success in India due to the complexity of the political situation, but in the INA phase, he was unencumbered by political constraints. He was thus able to unite together people of all communities in the INA.[97] This served as a role model to the people of India and Gandhi himself considered it an example worthy of emulation.[98] He also tried to implement some of his envisaged plans for post-independent India through the INA. The aforesaid viewpoint completely ignores this wider aspect of the INA. It may be observed that Bose would not have been able to provide such an exemplary model, had he not left India. Dr. Chittabrata Palit describes the INA as representing a miniature Indian nation that was much more than a military venture. In was a dress rehearsal for the free India of Bose's imagination and a culmination of his ideas of national reconstruction as Congress President. The INA was thus the epitome of a revolutionary ideology. Kalyan Kumar Ghosh observes in the same vein that the INA was a revolution with a philosophy.[99]

It is, however, a most important point as to whether Bose would have served his country better by remaining in India. In this connection, the viewpoint in support of Bose's decision to leave India needs to be examined.

Viewpoint in Support of Bose

The revolutionaries, scholars and intellectuals, who support Bose's decision to leave India, justify his stance on four grounds. Firstly, they believe that at that point of time, there was no other alternative available to Bose. Prabhangshu Pal is of the firm opinion that Bose would have failed to do anything alone in India. The British Government was sure to intern him. This view has been corroborated by Dr. Nemai Sadhan Bose.[100] He was conscious of the fact that the left movement stood divided within itself and the revolutionary groups also lacked unity. Jaiprakash Narayan, the leader of the CSP, had secretly written in an undated letter to Bose in 1940, pledging belated support to his leadership and urging independent mass action.[101] However, by that time, Bose's preparations for leaving the country were almost complete and he had come to believe in the urgency of armed struggle from outside India. Prof. Gautam Chattopadhyay feels that it was not too late and Bose could have considered Jaiprakash Narayan's proposal. Prof. Prasanta Kumar Ghosh, however, counters this argument by saying that if Bose had responded, he would have realized sooner or later that there were far too many contradictions in the movement which stood in the way of the broad front against British imperialism that he wished for. This may be correct because in view of the role played by the CSP at the Tripuri Congress, it was natural for Bose to feel suspicious about its credibility as an ally in a final struggle against British imperialism. The offer of Jaiprakash Narayan, in any case, came too late for him to change his mind, which was already made up regarding struggle from outside.[102]

Secondly, many revolutionaries and scholars feel that, India's freedom was hastened by Bose's decision to leave India, as the INA struggle infected the British for the first time with a fear psychosis by inciting a spirit of revolt in the British Indian Army and also the Royal Indian navy and Air Force. Helena Dútta believes that had Bose not confronted British imperialism with military might, the British would not have left India. Bose, she feels, would have been unable to make any impact had he stayed in India. Lieutenant S.K. Sengupta of the INA is of the view that Gandhi had

not been successful in kindling the fire, which would set the country aflame. Bose had to leave the country to kindle this fire, so that the quiescent volcano could explode. Biswanath Bose says that the RIN revolt was directly inspired by the example of the INA and it was succeeded by a spirit of revolt in the Indian Air Force. According to him, had Bose not escaped from India, events of historical importance like the naval revolt would not have occurred. Prabhangshu Pal believes that the INA was the largest single factor, which precipitated the transfer of power. Hugh Toye has written, "There can be little doubt that the Indian National Army not in its unhappy career on the battlefield but in its thunderous disintegration, hastened the end of British rule in India." Gerard Corr argues in the same vein that "The INA's military campaign had been an unmitigated disaster but they nevertheless played a significant role in the granting of their country's freedom."[103] While Bose's concept of a simultaneous uprising in India that would coincide with his armed attack failed his objective of inciting revolt within the Indian armed forces succeeded though belatedly. Michael Edwards, who has written on this period, notes that India owes more to Bose than anyone else though he seemed to be a failure.[104] This has been corroborated by the British Prime Minister, Clement Atlee, who personally confided to Phani Bhusan Chakravarti. the former Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court, in 1956, that the main reason behind Britain's decision to transfer power was the INA venture of Bose, which destroyed the loyalty of the army, the navy and the air force.[105] It may be argued that if Bose had not escaped from India, the loyalty of the army and navy to the British Empire would have remained unimpaired because the Congress envisaged no programme to alienate them from the empire. Even Haripada Chowdhury, who is a strong critic of Bose's decision to align with the fascist powers, admits that the INA was instrumental in bringing about organized desertion from the British Indian Army, which had never happened before.[106]

A section of Bengali scholars and revolutionaries also trace a direct connection between Bose's escape from India and Gandhi's Quit India movement, which was launched within one year of his departure. They argue that Gandhi was a changed man after Bose's escape and further suggest that he would have delayed the commencement of the Quit India struggle, had Bose not escaped from India. Thus, according to these, Bose created a new Gandhi by his departure from India and the Quit India movement reflected the spirit and influence of Bose at every point and was, in a way, "Gandhi's gift" to Bose.[107]

The Quit India movement falls outside the periodization of the present study, and thus the only relevant question is whether Bose had any kind of direct impact on Gandhi. What is important is that there is a total absence of any first hand documentary evidence about this. The assumption that Bose inspired Gandhi is based among other things on Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's testimony that Bose's escape from India made a great impression on Gandhi who admired his courage and resourcefulness and mentioned him with admiration.[108] Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose cites the additional testimony of Sarat Chandra Bose who noted that, Bose's escape exerted a tremendous influence on Gandhi. Samarendra Basu Thakur, who had close contacts with Gandhi at this time, feels that Gandhi's call for Quit India was expedited as a result of Bose's escape.[109] It may be inferred from this, that Gandhi was impressed by Bose's readiness to take any risk for his country's, freedom, but to say that Bose influenced him to launch the Quit India struggle, is a bit far fetched. A related, though hypothetical question is whether the course of India's freedom struggle would have had better prospects if Bose had gone to Japan a year earlier and taken over the reins of the Azad Hind Fauz. Possibly, in that case, the INA invasion would have coincided with the Quit India movement and the combined impact of the two movements would have proved irresistible for the British. Moreover, Bose went to Japan when her position in the war was not very good. The INA movement would have yielded much greater results had it been launched in the days of Japan's ascendancy in the war. The Quit India movement, despite serious handicaps, had far reaching repercussions throughout India and may have been able to achieve much more had it been backed by the INA from outside India.[110]

Finally, it has been argued by a recent scholar, Nripendra Kumar Ganguly, that Bose's decision to escape from India was a pointer to his pragmatism. Bose was never an ideologue and did not believe in any fixed ideology.[111] He argues that the de-ideologisation movement spearheaded by Daniel Bell in the 1950's vindicates Bose's line of thought and action.[112] Ganguly has a valid point in the sense that Bose was ideologically flexible and knew how to make suitable situational adjustments in consonance with the national interest. However, the reference to Daniel Bell is not entirely correct because Bell had spoken of the end of ideology in only the Western countries of the 1950's where old ideologies appeared to have lost their persuasive power. He did not speak of the total end of ideology and noted that in the nations of Asia and Africa, new ideologies like modernization, industrialization and

nationalism were emerging.[113] Moreover Bose did not dispense with ideology but discarded ideological dogmatism. The main source of strength of the INA was that it was inspired by a national ideology, which transcended all narrow limitations of caste, religion and community. Abid Hasan Safrani writes that, "We had a national ideology and a leader who not only imparted this ideology to us, but kept a zealous guard that it remained pure in its national approach not tinged with any other sentiment, regional or national."[114] In any liberation struggle, ideology serves as a motivating impulse and thus it is not correct to think in terms of the de-ideologisation of liberation struggles. Throughout his political life, Bose was inspired by a national ideology and it was in the INA that he gave it a concrete shape. According to Prof. Prasanta Kumar Ghosh, ideology awakens national consciousness. Bose's ideology was based on nationalism, which in turn, was based on a spirit of universal humanism, and this was manifested in the INA.[115]

An Alternative Viewpoint

Prof. Surya Banerjee provides an alternative viewpoint. He criticizes Bose's decision to leave India but does not take him to task for aligning himself with the fascist powers, as the communist scholars have done. To him, Bose was the only leader capable of providing an alternative leadership but unfortunately he lacked confidence in himself and did not realize the strength of his own position. He did not understand that while the political leaders had deserted him, the common people had not.[116] Prof. Banerjee refutes the conventional view that Gandhi had a greater mass base than Bose. To him, although the urban middle class formed the social basis of his leadership, its impact extended to all layers of society.[117] Thus, ultimately Bose's patriotism was vindicated but it symbolized the triumph of unreason.[118] The above view leads one to raise some important questions. Firstly, was Bose really a mass leader of Gandhi's stature? Secondly, why did he lack confidence in himself ? Thirdly, why should his escape from India, be termed as "unreason" when the indirect impact of the INA upsurge was quite significant?

As regards the first question, it is difficult to ascertain whether Bose had a greater mass base than Gandhi. However, the view that he had no mass base at all and his appeal was confined to the urban middle class[119] is not entirely correct. At least in Bengal, Bose had a greater mass following

than Gandhi. Biswanath Bose recalls from personal experience that Gandhi's mass meetings in Bengal often became objects of criticism and even ridicule.[120] The influence of Bose on the youth of Bengal became manifest even before his escape when in many Congress strongholds like Midnapore, a number of Congress leaders and workers switched over to the Forward Bloc.[121]

That Bose was able to establish a certain amount of mass base outside Bengal is also clear from Pattabhi Sitaramayya's testimony that the Anti-compromise Conference organized by Bose at Ramgarh in 1940 simultaneously with the Congress session, had a huge attendance and a large number of people raised their hands in response to Bose's query whether they were ready for a struggle. This version has been corroborated by Dwijendralal Sengupta, ex-Chairman of the Municipality of Silchar who has testified that an unprecedented procession of people greeted Bose at Ramgarh.[122] From the testimony of Hitendranarayan Mitra, a noted doctor, Bose visited Betia Township of the district of Champaran in Bihar, which was a Gandhian stronghold. Despite this, Bose's meeting attracted a huge crowd and his speech delivered in Hindi made a great impact on the people.[123] Even after Bose's escape from India, his influence was in evidence in Bihar particularly during the Quit India movement of 1942. The eminent historian Gyanendra Pandey shows that in Bihar and North India, Bose's military daring captured popular imagination much more than Gandhi.[124] From Bose's own account of his tour of India as leader of the Forward Bloc, it is known that he received a warm reception in Punjab, the United Provinces, Bombay, Karnataka and even in Gandhian bastions like Bombay, he received a warm welcome. In all the meetings of the Forward Bloc, there was a huge audience, which convinced Bose that the Forward Bloc had fired the imagination of the Bombay public.[125] Even in Assam, Bose's Forward Bloc made an impact though it was limited mainly to the region of Silchar where many people joined the Forward Bloc, and attempts were made to spread a network of the Forward Bloc in this area.[126]

One may not agree completely with Prof. Banerjee's view of Bose having a greater mass base than Gandhi but the exact extent of his mass base and impact deserves intensive research at the grass root level.

It is also not entirely correct to say that Bose's impact encompassed only the urban sections of society. Without comparing Bose with Gandhi, it may be pointed out that Bose was able to make an impact in the rural

areas. Ashimananda Saraswati observed in the course of a speech at Ranigunj, on October 9, 1969, that he had seen rural folk waiting eagerly for hours for their beloved leader Bose to arrive. It is, however, not clear whether he was referring to rural Bengal or rural India. Dr. G.L. Adhya is of the opinion that rural areas did not consist only of illiterate peasants but there was an educated class too which was swayed by Bose's appeal.[127] Thus, though Gandhi's overall mass base was greater than Bose, Bose's mass appeal was also not negligible. Furthermore, he was supported by the prominent peasant leader Swami Sahajananda Saraswati, who was closely associated with the Forward Bloc.[128]

The question, which now arises, is why did Bose not realize the strength of his position and hesitate to organize a movement within India? One possible explanation is that, the failure of left consolidation probably had a demoralizing effect on his mind and he became doubtful about the prospects of his success in India. Moreover, Bose had not made any plan to mobilize the labour and the peasantry in an armed struggle. He had depended on the cooperation of the leftist forces but with their alienation from him, the only alternative before Bose was to cultivate contacts with the common men comprising a vast strata of people including labour and peasantry and interact with them at the grass root level. Bose did not take up the challenge possibly because at that point of time, it appeared to be a time consuming and protracted process while Bose was impatient for immediate results. Prof. Banerjee feels that if Bose had been able to harness the labour and the peasantry in an armed struggle, it would have unleashed a revolution in India.[129] This is a hypothetical point but there is scope for research on whether an awakening had really been created among the labour and peasantry at that time and whether they were prepared to enlist under Bose's leadership accepting it as an alternative to Gandhi.

Finally, Prof. Banerjee's characterization of Bose's decision to leave India and his subsequent role as the leader of the INA as the "triumph of unreason" needs to be considered. It is a fact that Bose was able to arouse the masses to some extent but did not equip them sufficiently for a battle with British Imperialism. Narayan Bandyopadhyay, a noted revolutionary, says that no revolutionary effort could succeed unless it was backed by secret underground organizations. The Forward Bloc had no such organization behind it.[130] This is in tune with Prof. Banerjee's line of reasoning that without an organized political movement inspired by a revolutionary ideology no

revolutionary upheavals can occur.[131] It is a purely hypothetical point as to whether Bose would have achieved greater success in India than he did as commander of the INA. It was an extremely difficult task to build up a fighting force from among the common people of India particularly peasants and labourers because without military training and arms supply, no violent revolution would succeed and the British Government would suppress any such effort with the help of the police. Moreover, when Bose took charge of the INA, Rashbihari Bose had already developed it and Mohan Singh and thus, Bose had a ready revolutionary army at his disposal right from the beginning. Though he moulded and inspired the INA soldiers and transformed the INA into a genuine fighting force, he was not the creator of the INA. A.M. Nair, Bose's associate in the INA, writes that, "A higher place in the roll of honour should go to Rashbihari Bose who rebuilt the INA which Subhas threw into war as a small appendage of Japanese forces."[132] In India, he did not have any such ready made fighting force at his command and the only way in which he could have tried to create it, was by going underground because otherwise he was almost certain to have been arrested by the British Government and the revolutionary movement would have received a set back. This was no mean task and involved many constraints and impediments.

Prof. Banerjee's view may be however, considered from a different angle. If Bose really intended to provide a militant alternative to Gandhian leadership, he should have completely dissociated himself from the Congress after being banned from it and concentrated all his energies on the mobilization of the common people for an armed struggle. Instead, he lived in the fond hope of converting the Congress to his own viewpoint and even tried to persuade Gandhi to launch the struggle. Narayan Bandyopadhyay says that one of the main causes behind Bose's failure was that he always wanted the blessings of Gandhi and wanted to stage an armed revolution in the name of the Congress. The veteran revolutionary, Manohar Mukherjee, also noted the fact that Bose had a weakness for Gandhi and often thought twice before doing anything in violation of his wishes.[133] Bose had a soft corner for Gandhi, is evident from his radio address from Tokyo on July 6, 1944 saying, "Father of our nation! In this holy war for India's liberation we ask for your blessings and good wishes."[134] While this reveals on the one hand, the largeness of Bose's mind and his readiness to forget his differences with Gandhi, it also shows a kind of emotional attachment to

Gandhi, which was a weakness in Bose. He could not extricate himself from this and assigned great value to Gandhi's approval of his actions. Here Bose appears to have succumbed to unreason and displayed a somewhat ambivalent attitude as he followed a line different from Gandhi and yet wanted to derive sustenance, strength and inspiration from Gandhi's blessings. Prof. Banerjee does not however explain the victory of unreason in the life of Bose from this angle. His essential argument is that Bose underestimated his own strength and made a historic miscalculation. Prof. Banerjee's view, though thought provoking, does not however, obscure the historical significance of the INA and its indirect role in hastening India's freedom.

In the final phase of his political life in India, Bose displayed remarkable resilience and determination. After he was banned from the Congress, it appeared to many that Bose's political career had ended. However, he was able to make considerable impact through the Forward Bloc, and was never marginalized as a political entity. Interestingly, during this period he was invited by Gandhi to attend the special session of the Congress at Wardha though he had been expelled from the organization. This clearly shows that, his opinion still counted in the High command. Bose's exit from the Congress did not signal the triumph of Gandhism as in many established bastions of Gandhism, the Forward Bloc made a significant impact. Far from being demoralized, Bose gave ample proof of his potential to sway the masses even without the help of the Congress platform. However, when he failed to persuade Gandhi to commence the struggle for the final assault on British imperialism, Bose took the decision of his life which came in for much opprobrium, and yet which ensured him, a permanent place in history. In his last battle in India, Bose enlivened the prospects of a great upsurge within the country but could not carry it to its final conclusion because of his decision to strike from outside. Whether his historical impact would have been greater had he chosen India as his battleground, is one of the unanswered questions of history.

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122. See Sitaramayya, n. 15, p. 181. See Debasis, Das, "Subhas Chandra O Barak Upatyaka, Silchar Sahare", in Bijoy Kumar Nag, ed., *Jayashree-Netaji Subhas Chandra Basu Janmasatabarashiki Grantha* (Jayashree Patrika Trust, Calcutta, 1999), p. 358.
123. Hitendranarayan Mitra, "Betiay Subhas Chandra", *Jayashree* (Calcutta), No. 9, January 2000, p. 318.

124. Gyanendra Pandey, "The Revolt of August 1942 in Eastern U.P. and Bihar", in Pandey, n. 110, pp. 154-155, 159.
125. Subhas Chandra Bose, "Glimpses of My Tour", *Forward Bloc,* October 28-November 25, 1939 reprinted in Bose, n.4, pp. 216-226.
126. See Das, n. 122, pp. 358-359.
127. Shyama Das, *Ashimananda Sanga O Smritikatha* (Nirmal Pustakalaya, Calcutta, 1993), p. 178. Personal interview with Dr. G.L. Adhya, January 5, 2000.
128. For details, see Debabrata Biswas, ed., *Netaji Subhas Chandra Basu O Bharater Krishak Andolan* (Agragami Kisan Sabha, Calcutta, 1998).
129. Personal interview with Surya Banerjee, Calcutta, January 11, 2000.
130. See Bandyopadhyay, n. 89, p. 303.
131. Personal interview with Banerjee, n. 129.
132. See Nair, n. 95, p. 238.
133. See Bandyopadhyay, n. 89, p. 215. Personal interview with Manohar Mukherjee, Calcutta, August 9, 1998.
134. See Javeri and Batliwala, n. 86, p. 107.
135. *India Office Files 7.12.44 Poll (1) and 7.13.45 Poll (1)* cited in Nanda Mookerjee, *Swadhinatar Sandhane Nehru* (Nath Brothers, Calcutta, 1992), pp. 216-217.

Chapter - VIII

The Titanic Trio

Subhas Chandra Bose, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru represented the most fascinating constellation of forces in the history of Indian nationalist politics. Their constantly evolving relationship followed a dialectical pattern of interaction and unfolded through occasional manifestation of complementarities and contradictions throwing up interesting historical possibilities which cannot fail to stimulate the creative imagination of scholars and researchers and inspire them with innovative ideas. The three prominent leaders had the opportunity of working in close conjunction in the nationalist movement and influenced its direction and progress in a number of ways. Each had his own distinctive impact on the nation's struggle for emancipation. Gandhi was the awakener of nationalist consciousness in a moribund race, Nehru inspired the nation with a vision of the future world and was gifted with the temperament of a philosopher statesman while Bose was a warrior, philosopher and statesman all rolled into one. While the three did occasionally converge on a common platform, they were ultimately destined to fall apart. The reason lies in the complexity of their relationship, which was multidimensional encapsulating myriad factors, political, economic, cultural, intellectual, ideological, logistical, philosophical and even psychological. An integrated methodology of investigation coupled with an interdisciplinary approach, can lead one to the closest proximity of truth.

The mutual relationship of the triumvirate was shaped and fashioned not only by the imperatives of politics but also by the basic instincts, attitudes and propensities integral to human life. Emotion, impulse, intuition, ego, personal predilections and fixations and also the readiness to modify the same in response to situational exigencies, all figured prominently in determining their actions and response to each other. Though there is only a superficial linkage between the human world and the political, yet complete segregation of the two, would inevitably lead one to aberrations of judgment. For, subjective factors and imponderables cannot be totally excluded from a political discourse. Bose, Gandhi and Nehru were human beings first and politicians thereafter. The human qualities they developed in the course of

their life, were reflected in their political actions. The politics of the triumvirate was thus a mirror of their life. Conflict, competition and cooperation, the three fundamental sociological attributes of human relations, were in evidence at every point of their political career.

Bose the junior most of the three, was impatient, romantic, ebullient, desperate and a militant activist on the one hand and a philosophical rationalist and perceptive analyst on the other. He viewed Gandhi with reverence, but never surrendered to him because Bose alone had the guts to doubt and contest. Gandhi's infallibility and the temerity to explore an alternative to him. Nehru was a philosophical idealist by temperament and a globalist by conviction but not really a man of action. Gandhi was the leader of the masses whose pulse he could feel and whom he could mobilize for concerted action. He eclipsed Nehru as an activist and though there was a philosophical strain in him, he too like Bose, was predominantly a man of action. However, he desisted from impatience and waited for the advent of the opportune moment for launching his attack on the enemy. He was also prone to subjectivism like dependence on the Inner Voice. Still with all chinks in his armour, he was the guiding spirit of the movement. It would be historically futile to speculate what would have happened if these disparate qualities could be appropriately harnessed for united and dynamic action. One may instead seek to acquire a better and deeper understanding of the complex factors that conditioned their relationship and the circumstances leading to their alienation.

A) The Oscillating Pendulum (1921-38)

It was clear to Gandhi at the very outset, that Bose was a nationalist of a different brand. He would not take anything on trust but judge each issue on the touchstone of logic. Habitual obedience was anathema to him. Dr. Ranjit Sen correctly says that the skepticism of Subhas was "essentially a part of his youth but with it he mingled a charged frankness that came from the interior of his philosophical soul."[1] This clearly brings out the rationalism of the firebrand soldier who was also a philosopher of freedom and who was a votary of emancipation of the mind from any emotional or intellectual bondage. This might have created an ego problem for Gandhi not in the derogatory sense but in the larger interest of the country. For here was one who for the first time had refused unconditional allegiance to

him. Probably Gandhi foresaw as early as in 1921 that, Bose would at some point of time, envisage an alternative to his leadership and this would spell danger for the country. Despite all his professions of liberalism, Gandhi was irrevocable in his conviction that his perception of India's path of struggle was the only correct one. Thus dissidents and nonconformists like Bose could be at most temporarily accommodated on sufferance. Paradoxically Gandhi's basic contradiction with Bose emanating from his unshakable adherence to his own convictions reflected his closest bond with Bose who like him, was the last person to compromise on his convictions. Bose-Gandhi relations throughout Bose's political career up to his final break with Gandhi in 1939, resembled an oscillating pendulum alternating between complete acceptance and rejection with isolated indications of a superficial rapport. The relations were never normal though there was no dearth of mutual respect on either side. Bose could not disregard Gandhi's stature as a mass leader while Gandhi too could not fail to take Bose seriously because of his independent impact despite Gandhi's overwhelming dominance in the centrestage of nationalist politics.

When Bose joined the national movement in 1921,Gandhi had aroused the masses for a pervasive non-cooperation movement in conjunction with the Khilafat movement with the obvious intention of securing the support of the Muslims. Bose in an article entitled *Desher Dak* in December 1925, hailed Gandhi as the initiator of the nationalist movement in India.[2] He however criticized the introduction of the Khilafat question into Indian politics as unfortunate as the goals of the Khilafat did not correspond with those of the Congress. Moreover the Khilafatist Muslims did not join the Congress but had their separate organization and thus could not be absorbed into the ranks of nationalists after the Khilafat issue became a dead one.[3] The basic contradiction was that Bose never endorsed Gandhi's method of injecting religion into politics and in this sense he was a Machiavellian as he was in favour of secularization of politics. Here his mode of thinking coincided with that of Aurobindo Ghosh who in a letter to his brother Barin Ghosh in April 1920, excoriated Gandhi's envisaged combination of religion and politics. Subhas also branded as "childish", Gandhi's promise of *'swaraj within one year'* apprehending that if unfulfilled, it would seriously damage the credibility of the Congress in the estimation of the people.[4] When Viceroy Lord Reading offered a compromise agreeing to release Congress prisoners and lifting the ban on Congress volunteers, C.R. Das responded positively

and so did Bose after initial misgivings, but Gandhi's intransigence on his demand for the release of Muhammed Ali and Shaukat Ali the Khilafat leaders, repulsed the viceroy irrevocably. Amales Tripathi contends on the basis of the Viceroy's telegram to the Secretary of state on December18, 1921 saying he had no intention of granting dominion status to India in the near future, that the offer was an eyewash intended to dampen the ardour of the movement.[5] But Bose and Das felt that in case the Viceroy backtracked, the Congress could resume the struggle commanding much greater credibility and prestige. Neither fell in line with Gandhi's total identification with the Khilafat leaders, which led him to squander what C.R. Das called the chance of a lifetime. Bose appreciated the widespread impact of the Non-cooperation Movement but vehemently criticized Gandhi for his abrupt suspension of the movement following the escalation of violence at Chauri Chaura. He felt that, "To sound the order of retreat just when public enthusiasm was reaching the boiling point, was nothing short of a national calamity."[6] Many of Gandhi's followers accepted the correctness of his decision after initial outburst of anger but Bose remained unconvinced. He evidently did not endorse Gandhi's logic that if the example of Chauri Chaura were replicated in other places, the very ideal of nonviolence would be defeated. Bose believed that total adherence to nonviolence could not be ensured in any movement as nobody could guarantee against sporadic eruptions of violence. Secondly, Bose did not exalt nonviolence over national independence. Thirdly, he had a lurking fear that Gandhi was becoming the dictator of the Congress. He alleged that Gandhi had taken the decision to suspend the movement unilaterally without consulting the representatives of the different provinces. Describing the decision as the 'dictator's decree', Bose lamented, "the entire intellect of the congress, has been mortgaged to one man and those who dare to think freely and speak out openly are regarded by the Mahatma and his disciples as heretics."[7] Here, Bose sounded a prophetic note because he was destined to be expelled from the Congress in future on charges of indiscipline as he rebelled against the perpetuation of Gandhi's monopoly in the Congress and the acceptance of his word as sacrosanct. Bose advocated the democratization of the Congress, which was clearly swinging towards totalitarianism a trend, which Bose viewed with extreme repugnance.

While Bose and Gandhi differed on the issue of Khilafat, Gandhi supported his decision as Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation

to fill up 25 of the 33 vacancies with Muslim candidates. He also protested against the arrest of Bose saying, "It is unthinkable that under a Government supposed to be civilized, a man of Subhas Chandra Bose's position, should be summarily arrested and detained without the prospect of trial. I can only hope that Subhas Chandra Bose will soon be restored to the Corporation and he will be able to resume the services I have heard he has been rendering with great ability, efficiency and integrity."[8]

Subhas spent a large part of his initial political career in internment. Thus, it was only after the resumption of political life in 1928, that he had the opportunity of regular interaction with Gandhi at the national level. Elements of conflict, competition and cooperation were manifested in their diverse ways in the unfoldment of their evolving relationship. Gandhi viewed Bose's concept of militarism expressed in his conception of the volunteer movement with unmistakable antipathy as to him, it represented the rationalization of violence. The dichotomy of militarism and pacifism, which accounted for the Gandhi-Bose divide, may be attributed to the fact that Bose was nurtured in the cult of *Shaktivada* or the doctrine of power through mother worship in consonance with the Bengal revolutionary tradition. His adoration of Goddess Kali as the deity of power bore the perceptible influence of Vivekananda who portrayed Kali as the symbol of destruction of evil in his poems 'Kali the Mother' and 'Let Shyama dance there'. The terrible imagery of the Goddess, 'scattering plagues of sorrow, dancing mad with joy' inflamed the mind of Subhas. He sought to internalize the essential spirit of Vivekananda's message exhorting the youth to recognize the mother instinctively in suffering; sorrow and annihilation for the seeds of destruction would bear the fruits of new creation in future. Dr Ranjit Sen observes, "Spiritually Subhas was the descendant of Bankim, Vivekananda and Tagore and his youthful enthusiasm inspired him to take the mother concept to its logical fulfillment."[9] He adds appositely that "The mother had earlier obsessed Aurobindo and now it held Subhas in grip."[10] This applies to Aurobindo and Vivekananda but not Tagore who never subscribed to the cult of mother worship but was a virulent critic of it obviously because of his Brahmo background. Ranjit Sen thus says that the concept of strength as the derivative of pure thought was a gift from Tagore who held that out of the perfection of the inner self, the true being emerges. Subhas accepted this but went ahead of the milestone where Tagore had stopped, for Tagore would not think of a cult of power but Subhas did and tried to settle in life. Gandhi

too was appalled by the custom of animal sacrifice central to mother worship because it was against his cherished principle of nonviolence. In his autobiography, Gandhi relates his visit to a Kali temple where he was greeted by rivers of blood and could not bear to stand there. With undisguised anger, Gandhi writes, "To my mind, the life of a lamb is no less precious than that of a human being. How is it that Bengal with all its knowledge, intelligence sacrifice and emotion, tolerates this slaughter?" Bose's spiritual ancestry and spontaneous self–identification with Vivekananda and Aurobindo, led him to assimilate the martial cult, which was the insignia of Bengal nationalism. Here, the influence of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel Anandamath that was the Bible of nationalism in Bengal is also evident. Ranjit Sen writes, "Ever since Bankim Chandra wrote his *Anandamath*, the Bengalis had compounded the concepts of the mother and the motherland into a unity. The concept of the mother to which Bankim, Aurobindo and Subhas adhered so much, was a symbol of this unity. Bankim imbued this symbol with divinity and subsequently the Bengal leaders Aurobindo, Vivekananda and Subhas worshipped this divinity as the source of all power. This mother was the Kali of Bankim and the Shyama of Vivekananda."[11] Dr Sen adds that, "Ever since Bankim the Bengalis had worshipped this incarnate of *Shakti* but where Subhas differed from all his brethren in Bengal was that he wanted to translate this *Shakti* into practice."[12] Gandhi in contrast imbibed the spirit of Vaishnavism and Jainism, which were antithetical to the *Shakti* cult. His spiritual ancestry may be traced to the teachings of Christ and the works of Tolstoy, Thoreau and Ruskin. He may have developed a certain attraction and admiration for Vivekananda but the former did not 'enter' his life as he did in that of Subhas. Vivekananda was also a supporter of animal sacrifice and once said in reply to a query of Sister Nivedita, "Why not a little blood to clear up the picture." There was thus a wide spiritual hiatus between Gandhi and Bengal. Prabodh Kumar Sanyal, the noted Bengali novelist says that, Bengal never accepted nonviolence and Gandhism was never strong here because the Bengalis have a natural liking for blood.[13] Stanley Wolpert observes in the same vein, "One of the main factors leading to Bose's eventual clash with Gandhi as Congress President, was that he and his militant followers shared none of Gandhi's aversion to violence and martial tactics."[14] Gandhi as a result of his experiments with truth, graduated to his own concept of power that is the power of love and nonviolence, which was intrinsically incompatible with the philosophy of Bengal nationalism, which espoused militant power. Both he and Bose

accepted love as the essence of reality, but Bose could not subscribe to the Gandhian affirmation of nonviolence as the infallible expression of love. The idea of application of the power of love for transforming the character of British imperialism appeared chimerical to him. Though he identified love as an essential ingredient of national life, yet in a fight against British imperialism, it was totally ineffectual. Bose was never irreverent towards Vaishnavism but distinguished its utility at the transcendental level from the world of objective reality. Like Vivekananda, who preferred the Krishna of Kurukhshetra sounding the clarion call of battle to the Krishna of Vrindavana playing with the flute, Bose too lionized the former as the voice of the immortal youth. While he was intensely enamoured of Vaishnavism in his private life, as evident from his letter to Bivabati Bose on December16, 1925, saying that the devotee gets closer to Krishna through the ordeal of separation, Bose at the same time felt that the extension of this idea to the political field, was not conducive to the inculcation of a revolutionary mentality and was not an ideal role model for a subject race. There was place for love in Bose's *Shaktivada*, but it was not a weapon of struggle. Gandhi extended his concept of pacifism to the point of interpreting the Gita as the apostle of non-violence.[15] Revolutionaries, like Prabhangshu Shekhar Pal and Bimal Dasgupta, have found this both incomprehensible and logically impermissible for a war in their opinion can never be nonviolent.[16] Subhas evidently thought in the same light because of his innate belief in the impracticability of nonviolence as the instrument for the ultimate overthrow of British rule. His perceptive worldwide study of revolutionary movements, instilled in him, the conviction that no country was ever liberated by nonviolence. The bent of his mind is clear from his remark to Dilip Kumar Roy that, "The British know Gandhi very well. They do not fear his spinning wheel and nonviolent *Satyagraha*. They fear only the men with the bomb like Bagha Jatin, Kanai Datta, Aurobindo, Madame Cama, Savarkar, etc."[17]

Gandhi's attitude towards revolutionaries alternated between repulsion and ambivalence. In the course of a private meeting in the house of C.R.Das, Gandhi reportedly castigated the revolutionaries as enemies of the country, which provoked an indignant reaction from the noted novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterjee who forced Gandhi to withdraw his remark.[18] This was clearly under duress because Gandhi could not integrate his own world with that of the revolutionaries who, in his opinion, were after all misguided youths.[19] After the death of Jatin Das, the noted revolutionary of the Bengal Volunteers

group, after 64 days of hunger strike in Lahore jail on September13, 1929, Gandhi maintained a complete silence and later wrote to Bhupendra Nath Banerjee on October12, 1929, that, "I have preferred to observe silence over the self immolation of Jatindra Nath Das because I feel that by writing on it I would have done more harm to the country's cause than good."[20] Bose found Gandhi's attitude 'inexplicable'[21] and hailed Das as a symbol of India's fight against British imperialism. He led his funeral procession and reportedly preserved his ashes.[22]

Gandhi's role in the execution of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru convicted in the Lahore Conspiracy case on March 23, 1931, deserves careful consideration in this respect. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed on March 5, 1931, whereby Gandhi agreed to suspend civil disobedience and the Viceroy agreed to release all political prisoners. Bose urged Gandhi to pressurize the Viceroy to commute the death sentences of the three revolutionaries and even break with him on this point if necessary.[23] The three were, however, duly hanged. Gurdev Singh Deol alleges that, Gandhi deliberately did not save the lives of Bhagat Singh and others.[24] Allan Campbell Johnson cites the testimony of Sir Herbert Emerson, the Home Member that, Gandhi and Irwin had reached an agreement to get the three executed.[25] K.K. Khullar however says that, Gandhi pleaded hard but failed.[26] Manohar Mukherjee, the late revolutionary, testifies that Gandhi had told him and other prisoners at Presidency Jail with tears in his eyes that he had tried to save the lives of the three but failed.[27] Bose's evaluation of Gandhi's role was one of reasoned ambivalence. He admitted that Gandhi had tried his best [28] but added in a critical vein that he did not identify himself with the three and this convinced the Viceroy that he would not risk a break with him.[29] Lord Irwin has himself testified that Gandhi had pleaded for a mere postponement of the death sentences.[30] To sum up the episode, Gandhi tried willy nilly to save the lives of the three revolutionaries but his foremost concern was to uphold his truce with Irwin. The life of Bhagat Singh and others was to him a secondary issue. It was naïe of Bose to expect Gandhi to risk a point of no return with the Viceroy because he never shared any spiritual rapport with the revolutionaries and at this point of time, he was thinking in terms of compromise rather than confrontation with British imperialism. Still Bose did not go to the extent of a complete break with Gandhi and adopted an attitude of reasoned moderation rather than that of a fierce, extremist rebel. Gandhi encountered hostile public demonstrations at Karachi

on the eve of the Congress session, as there was a widespread feeling that he had betrayed the cause of the revolutionaries.[31] Apprehending the collapse of his truce with Lord Irwin in the face of the congregated might of the leftwing, Gandhi persuaded Bose to undertake not to oppose the truce in the open session though he was free to criticize it outside the Congress.[32] Subhas acquiesced in the larger interests of the Congress and issued a statement clarifying that the left wing did not approve of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact but refrained from dividing the house in view of the prevailing circumstances.[33] Subsequently, a resolution was passed in the Congress session, which was laudatory of Bhagat Singh and his comrades. Here, we discern the interplay of both competition and cooperation in Bose-Gandhi relations. Gandhi himself had told Lord Irwin that Bose was his opponent.[34] He treated Bose as a potential competitor and yet depended on his cooperation at crucial moments. The character of Gandhi-Bose relations was entirely determined by situational exigencies. Ever since the Calcutta Congress of 1928, where Bose moved an amendment to Gandhi's resolution on Dominion status and espoused the cause of complete independence, Gandhi became sure that one capable of challenging his supremacy had appeared on the stage. Though Bose's amendment was defeated by 377 votes, the slender margin of victory was a clear signal to Gandhi. For Bose, it was victory in defeat. In the Lahore Congress session of 1929, he himself sponsored a resolution on complete independence, which was largely forced by Bose's persistent campaign in support of the same over the years. The impact of Bose and the leftwing was sufficiently powerful to make Gandhi apprehensive. His decision to sponsor Nehru as Congress President in 1929 reflected his urge to neutralize the leftist challenge.

Bose was not at all optimistic about the outcome of the Round Table Conference, which he believed, was intended to hoodwink the Indians, as the Indian delegates would be selected by the British government and not the people of India. Secondly, the provisions for the amnesty of prisoners were inadequate. There was also no amnesty for the Garhwali soldiers who had refused to fire on an unarmed crowd in April 1930 and were court-martialed and imprisoned. It was practical experience rather than youthful effervescence which convinced Bose that the proposed truce was intended to slacken the tempo of the civil disobedience movement and allow the enemy the breathing space for recuperation. Above all the Gandhi-Irwin pact avoided the issue of *Swaraj*. Bose was of the decided view that immediately after

his return to India, Gandhi should be requested to give an ultimatum to the British government and the Congress should follow a bold policy vis-à-vis British imperialism.[35] After the resumption of the struggle following the failure of the Round Table Conference, Gandhi suddenly undertook a fast unto death following the declaration of the Communal Award by the British Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald on August 17, 1931, providing separate electorates for the depressed classes. Finally, he ended his fast on September 20, 1932, and the whole country heaved a sigh of relief. Subhas appreciated the far-reaching effect of the fast in arousing the conscience of the Hindus and providing an impetus to the movement for abolition of untouchability.[36] At the same time he noted in a critical vein that the Poona Pact had magnified the issue of the depressed classes out of proportion and conveyed to European circle, the impression that apart from the Hindu-Muslim divide, the Hindus were themselves torn by internal dissensions. He also accused Gandhi of susceptibility to 'subjectivism, which seizes him at times and makes him utterly blind to and oblivious of objective realities.'[37] While Bose welcomed the end of the fast that saved Gandhi's life, he was bitterly critical about the diversion of the focus of struggle that is the goal of *Swaraj*. With all his reverence for Gandhi, Subhas did not exalt him over the country and thus felt that rational thinking had been suspended during his fast and it was much later that the people realized that the Poona Pact had not abolished separate electorates as such. Moreover the Hindus were antagonized by the terms of the Pact, which provided for 148 seats for the depressed classes in the provincial legislatures as against 71 provided by the Communal Award and these would be given at the expense of the Hindus.[38] Bose's response to Gandhi reveals a singularly objective bent of mind almost amounting to clinical detachment. However, documents available at the British Museum Library and Secret service sources indicate that he had failed to appreciate the social significance of Gandhi's campaign which instilled a new sense of self pride in the untouchables. It was intended to counterbalance the British policy of exploiting the cleavage between depressed classes and upper caste Hindus.[39] Bose's total concentration on the political aspect of the struggle, made him overlook the inseparable linkage between the political and social aspects of the struggle.

After the eventual suspension of civil disobedience in May 1934, Bose who was then in Vienna, issued a joint manifesto with Vithalbhai Patel, the Indian revolutionary exiled there declaring, "The latest action of the Mahatma,

is a concession of failure as far as the present method of the Congress is concerned. We are clearly of the opinion that as a political leader, Mahatma Gandhi has failed. Time has therefore come for a radical reorganization of the Congress with a new principle and with a new method. Non-cooperation cannot be given up but the form of non-cooperation will have to be changed into a more militant one and the fight for freedom to be waged on all fronts."[40] This was the first time that Bose had openly called for an alternative to Gandhi which was the result of progressive disillusionment. His unconcealed disgust was also vented to Romain Rolland in April 1935 that 'India must get rid of Gandhi's policy if she wanted to become independent.'[41] Rolland himself testifies that, Bose had tried to convince him that civil resistance had failed once and for all.[42] In a private conversation, Bose reportedly described Gandhi as a useless piece of furniture.[43] Prof Somnath Roy has taken Bose to task for this irreverent remark saying nobody had till date attacked Gandhi in such uncivil language.[44] The fundamental flaw in this line of analysis is that stray remarks convey only a partial reflection of reality and undue emphasis on them is bound to lead one to grave errors of judgment. Moreover private remarks made in the spur of the moment command less authority than public pronouncements. There is no evidence to suggest that Bose ever publicly disparaged Gandhi. Despite his fulminations against Gandhi, Bose never lost his objective focus and there was not a trace of personal animus in his criticisms.

In his book 'The Indian struggle' published in 1935, Bose criticized Gandhi for his deficiency in the art of diplomacy, which prevented him from understanding the character of his opponents. Secondly, he did not utilize the method of international propaganda. Thirdly, he envisaged a false unity of irreconcilable interests. Furthermore, he simultaneously projected himself as a world teacher and the leader of an enslaved race. Bose was correct to the extent that Gandhi lacked the psychological equipment to outmanoeuvre his opponents at the Round Table Conference and would perhaps have achieved better results had he spoken in the voice of Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin. Of course Bose was not emotionally enamoured of dictators but admired their skill and resourcefulness without which formidable opponents could not be overpowered. Bose appreciated Gandhi's decision to visit Mussolini who was the only man who counted in European politics but added that he should have cultivated contacts with other influential politicians of Europe for the mobilization of international public opinion for the Indian

cause. Here, Bose was not entirely correct because Gandhi's personal image enhanced India's prestige in the international forum but the fact remained that he was the representative of a subject race. Moreover, it was the propagation of the cause of India's *swaraj* rather than the gospel of nonviolence, which was the need of the hour. Bose recognized the role of Gandhi in converting the Congress into a living and fighting organization and paid eloquent tributes to him for achieving so much in so short a time by his single minded devotion, relentless will and indefatigable labours.[45] During an interview in Budapest on May 9, 1934, he said that Gandhi's pure and lofty character would always afford an example to the Indian masses.[46] In another statement issued from Belgrade on June 9, 1934, He said that the Gandhian movement was rapidly gaining ground.[47] He also said privately to Kitty Kurti, "There is nobody I admire more than Gandhi .He has changed the face of India. Politically however I cannot agree with him any more."[48] In a secret note dated January 1 1935, R. Peel of the Public Department wrote that Bose's book was written in an air of sweet reasonableness and the criticisms of Gandhi, though forcible, are softened by the obvious admiration of the writer for him in many ways. On the same day J. T. Gwyn of the Manchester Guardian, said that even the followers of Gandhi would have to admit that Bose's criticisms of him were not malicious.

Such was the character of Gandhi-Bose relation till 1937, oscillating between extremes. During this time, he was in the words of Louis Fischer, sometimes a sophisticated critic and sometimes a fierce opponent of Gandhi.[49] Ranjit Sen hits the nail on the head saying that, "Subhas Chandra Bose was torn between two feelings-a reverence for the Mahatma and a profound dislike for Mr. Gandhi. This reverence never sank but the elements of dislike gradually mounted and in the long run they coalesced into an insurmountable barrier which Subhas could not transcend."[50] These elements of dislike occasionally elicited intemperate outbursts, which reflected Bose's incessant mental restlessness and impatience for a showdown with British imperialism. Three weeks before his disappearance, Bose said to N.B. Khare, "Can you say when this Gandhi will disappear from the politics of India? He has emasculated the nation and there is no hope for our country as long as Gandhism prevails."[51] This sounds like consigning Gandhi to flames and yet it was Subhas who hailed Gandhi as the Father of the Nation. No greater token of respect was ever bestowed on Gandhi even by his most ardent disciples. And Bose was not alone in his periodic moments of disgust and

exasperation. Shanti Das, the noted revolutionary, has testified that she along with the internees of Hijli jail felt very bitter about the suspension of Civil-disobedience and endorsed the Bose-Patel manifesto.[52] Nehru too felt that Civil-disobedience had suffered due to Gandhi's fast.[53] Bose despite his explosions of anger was not carried away by the illusion that Gandhi had become redundant and declared in Ireland on February10, 1936, that, Gandhi had not lost one bit of his influence in India.[54] Thus after his return to India he was more circumspect and less aggressive. However, his basic conviction, which he expressed in an undated letter to Satyendra Nath Majumdar in 1934 that excessive dependence on one person, was a weakness of the national movement which was an objective reality, remained unshaken[55] along with his innate belief which none of his compatriots dared to express, that Mahatma Gandhi has rendered and shall continue to render phenomenal service to the country but India's salvation will not be achieved under his leadership.

B) The Quiescent volcano

After his release from internment in1937, Bose resumed his active political career on a somewhat moderate note. He was now politically much more mature and intellectually advanced. It was obvious that he did not desire any immediate clash with Gandhi. It was not a case of surrendering hands down but rather an indication of political sagacity assigning priority to unity in the Congress over all other considerations. In 1938, Bose was catapulted to the pedestal of Congress President on Gandhi's recommendation. While there are numerous alternative explanations of Gandhi's support for his competitor, the attitudinal change in Bose must have strengthened his confidence to control him. Anton Pelinka says that Gandhi needed an anti-Gandhi as President and Bose was just that. Nehru had failed to resolve the internal contradictions of the Congress during his consecutive terms as President in 1936 at Lucknow and 1937 at Faizpur. Subhas was the one who could unify these contradictions into a dialectical union. He visualized Bose as a unifier.[56] In retrospect it appears that Gandhi's calculation was not illogical, for Bose was indeed qualified for the role of integrator and at least during his first term, there was no breach in the Congress. His presidential address at Haripura reaffirmed the faith of the Congress in Gandhi as the motive force of the national movement. However, the seeds of the final break

were sown in Haripura itself as Bose's advocacy of economic planning and declaration of his determination to fight federation, was a clear signal to Gandhi that beneath the veneer of agreement, his contradictions with Bose remained as before. Amales Tripathi is right in saying that the Haripura speech itself contained the seeds of Tripuri as it alienated the Rightists. Actually, Gandhi wanted an integrator, who would seek to unify the Congress along strictly Gandhian lines. Bose was accommodating rather than rebellious but not prepared to compromise on his fundamental position, for he could not disown his own self for the sake of Gandhi's benediction. It is a fact that Gandhi-Bose relations were never normal and their periodic bonhomie was actuated by strictly political reasons. Penilka is right in his remark that Gandhi had reservations about Bose as a person but accepted his political role.[57] This role would however be dictated and decided by Gandhi and any assertion of independence, would mean elimination. Bose was a balanced nonconformist but his unfolding image in the estimation of the Rightists, was that of a rebel and rebels had no place in Gandhi's vocabulary. Thus the stage was set for the eruption of the quiescent volcano.

C) Victory in Defeat

The electoral triumph of Bose in 1939 over Gandhi's candidate Dr Pattavi Sitaramayya unleashed a sequence of events that culminated in Bose's resignation as President. This was the period when Congress politics underwent a qualitative change. Since Subhas Chandra Bose still enjoys an iconic status in the imagination of many, therefore even after nearly 66 years, it is fashionable to upbraid Gandhi for his vindictive victimization of Subhas. A change in perspective is necessary for a proper appreciation of the incident. Firstly, in politics, there can be no final norm of ethics. The question of ethical justification of an action is always relative. It is true that Gandhi dislodged Subhas by clever and clandestine methods and to some scholars like Amales Tripathi this was unbecoming of him. Such a line of analysis appears subjective. It may be contended that from Gandhi's side this was the only right thing for him to do. For Bose had challenged Gandhi's supremacy and with the progressive radicalization of the movement under his militant leadership, the entire character of the freedom struggle was due for a metamorphosis with the ominous prospect of marginalization of nonviolence as the weapon against British imperialism. Gandhi did not

envisage any personal rivalry with Subhas but he equated his own fate with that of India and felt that the defeat of Gandhi in the hands of Subhas, would land the country in a dire crisis and inaction on his part, would mean moral responsibility for the same. Just as Bose refused to exalt Gandhi over India, Gandhi too was not ready to allow Bose to supersede India. This cannot be considered immoral, but the method employed by Gandhi to oust Bose, signified a radical departure from conventional norms of morality. Gandhi viewed Machiavellian politics based on the dictum; end justifies the means with extreme abhorrence. Yet he was distinctly Machiavellian in his determination to remove Subhas as to him the end was primary and the means secondary. From the angle of Political Science, this may be construed as a new approach to Machiavelli based on the Paradox of Morality. Gandhi applied seemingly immoral means for the accomplishment of a greater moral purpose. Thus, paradoxically Gandhi's inflexibility towards Subhas, actually reflected the flexibility of his moral theory. To him, the concept of morality was fluid and he was prepared to sacrifice conventional moral norms if they posed an impediment to the greater moral purpose of the future. In this sense, Gandhi incarnated the Krishna of Kurukhshetra who advised the Pandavas to throw moral scruples to the winds. This leads us to the second seminal point of enquiry as to why Gandhi resorted to Machiavellianism? Could he not have fought Bose in a straightforward manner? Was he apprehensive that in the event of a direct contest, Bose would have prevailed over him? Objectively speaking, Gandhi was disconcerted with Bose's ascendancy, which unsettled him psychologically. He wanted to get rid of him by hook or by crook. As a result some interesting historical possibilities were nipped in the bud, for had Gandhi posed as the leader of the Rightwing opposition against Bose, a genuine trial of strength would have ensued. Gandhi avoided it and chose to remain away from Tripuri, where the Pant resolution was passed. Though it cannot be proved that Gandhi was directly behind it, the fact that he was cognisant of it, is clear from his statement in Vrindavana on May 5, 1939, saying that while he was fasting at Rajkot, he was told about Pant's resolution and he had advised his followers to bring a motion of no-confidence against Bose if they had the courage to do so. He said further that if the delegates felt they had made a mistake by electing Subhas, they should fight him in a straightforward manner, which was the only civilized way open to them.[58] This was certainly not Machiavellian, but Gandhi's evasive replies to the queries of Bose on the Pant resolution,

betrayed a streak of deviousness. He said that he disliked the resolution. Then why did he not condemn it? Why did he express his inability to interpret the resolution, which was clearly ultravires? The obvious answer is that it provided the surest guarantee for the ouster of Bose. In a sharply worded letter dated April 24, 1939, N.B Khare reminded Gandhi that, the agitation against Bose beginning with the resignation of 12 members of the working committee was engineered, fostered and encouraged by Gandhi's statement that Bose's victory was his defeat. He further reminded Gandhi that he had attributed Bose's victory to the bogus membership of the Congress but had not made any reference to it with respect to the Pant resolution. He further alleged that all sorts of coercion and allurements had been resorted to for securing votes for this resolution and yet Gandhi's democratic conscience felt that Bose should interpret this resolution and carry it out.[59] It is here that Gandhi lost out to Bose. Subhas was a greater Machiavellian than Gandhi in his exaltation of ends over means and separation of religion and politics, but he never applied Machiavellian techniques in Congress politics. The Machiavellian diplomacy, which Bose missed in Gandhi, was ultimately used with telling effect against him rather than British imperialism. It is alleged that Bose did not take up Gandhi's challenge by appointing his independent working committee, but it may be conversely argued that Gandhi too did not throw the gauntlet to Bose in a forthright manner. Gandhi wanted to convert his self-proclaimed defeat into a victory over Bose, but his methods were self-defeating though the end was duly achieved. Gandhi had done the right thing in the wrong way. The Tripuri episode left a very bitter taste in the mouth of Bose and it is one of the unanswered questions of history whether Gandhi could have overthrown Bose without adopting Machiavellian tactics. But there was a distinct lack of courage and frankness on his part, which led Gandhi to view the magnified image of Bose with certain trepidation and forced him to launch a un-Gandhian backlash. For this was a different Gandhi, a schemer with killer's instinct displaying guile and dissimulation. Bose was the largest single factor behind this U turn. He had jolted his citadel of supremacy and vindicated his own significance in Gandhi's thought which never dwindled. Thus in reality, Subhas was victorious in defeat.

D) In search of the Elusive synthesis

Subhas Chandra Bose and Mahatma Gandhi represented unlike poles

of Indian nationalist politics, which ought to have attracted each other, but in this case, oscillated between attraction and repulsion. There were many points of concurrence. Firstly, scholars like Chittabrata Palit and Pradip Bose believe that prior to 1939, Bose was an adherent of nonviolence.[60] Revolutionaries like Manohar Mukherjee also share the same view.[61] This view is correct to the extent that in India, Bose assiduously abided by the Congress policy of nonviolence and endured physical assault with the kind of forbearance Gandhi expected from his *Satyagrahi*. On January 26, 1931, Bose who was then the Mayor of Calcutta, was brutally assaulted by the police while leading a procession towards Ochterlony Monument. Sachindra Nath Mukherjee, the Councillor of the Corporation, upbraided the police for lathicharging the Mayor who had throughout maintained a spirit of nonviolence.[62] Even in his presidential speeches at Haripura and Tripuri, Bose spoke of nonviolent *Satyagraha*. However he was convinced about the inevitability of armed struggle in the last stage of the movement and hence did not accept nonviolence in the heart of hearts. He was a militant revolutionary by conviction and a Gandhian under duress. Both Gandhi and Bose were apostles of communal harmony. They derived their broad outlook from a common conviction about of the inclusiveness of the Indian civilization. Bose wrote, "The ethnic diversity of India has never been a problem for throughout her history, she has been able to absorb different races and impose on them, a common culture and tradition. Though geographically, ethnologically and historically, India presents an endless diversity to any observer, there is none the less a fundamental unity underlying this diversity."[63] Gandhi argues in the same vein, "Hinduism is not an exclusivist religion. In it there is room for worship of all peoples of the world. It has absorbed many tribes within its fold."[64] Just as Bose declared in his Haripura address that there would be no state interference in religion in free India, Gandhi too wrote in the Harijan on August 24, 1947, that the state should be undoubtedly secular.[65] Gandhi was also infatuated by the example of unity and solidarity set by the INA of Bose and paid eloquent tributes to it in a speech in Delhi on April5, 1946.[66] Gandhi evidently saw in the INA, the visible embodiment of the universal humanism, which is the quintessence of India's civilization. Chittabrata Palit rightly says that the INA was Bose's fitting tribute to the ideals of Gandhi as it represented a miniature nation.[67] Dr Palit also observes that Bose and Gandhi sought a spiritual-cultural affiliation with India's civilization and sought to discover India

through spiritual pilgrimage implying complete involvement in and integration with the spiritual basis of her civilization.[68] S.C Daniel also makes the valid point that both Gandhi and Bose subscribed to the philosophy of synthesis as the guiding principle of nationalism.[69]

Neither Bose nor Gandhi was Marxist by conviction. Both were critical of the Marxian theory of economic determinism. They also rejected the concept of class conflict and subscribed to the idea of class collaboration. Both of them were committed to the ideal of a society free from exploitation and an egalitarian social order based on justice and equality. However, while Bose was in favour of liquidation of landlordism after independence, Gandhi envisaged the harmony of labour and capital through his idea of trusteeship aiming at the reformation rather than destruction of capitalism. Bose was, however, categorical in his rejection of capitalism and commitment to socialism the reason being that he was a revolutionary while Gandhi was essentially a reformist. Philosophically, both were humanists who envisioned a social order free from bondage. Critics, like Prof. Suniti Kumar Ghosh feel that Gandhi was the representative of the Comprador class comprising big businessmen like G.D. Birla who were accomplices of British imperialism while Subhas represented the national bourgeoisie who rose through a process of struggle rather than collusion with British imperialism.[70] Gandhi, says Prof. Surya Banerjee, relied on the nascent capitalism of India while Bose was not in the good books of the capitalists.[71] He followed traditional revolutionary ethics.[72] This debatable view has been endorsed by revolutionaries, like Bimal Dasgupta, who said in a personal interview on November 18, 1998 that Gandhi's word was Birla's word and Prabhangshu Shekhar Pal who described Gandhi as the 'agent general for perpetuating British rule in India' in an interview on February 13, 1998. While Bose was aware of the influence of Birla and wealthy capitalists on Gandhi, he did not consider Gandhi the agent of capitalism and refuted this charge in an interview to the Pester Lloyed at Budapest on May 9, 1934.

Bose was much more modern in outlook than Gandhi whom Pradip Bose describes as 'a humanist traditionalist incapable of facing up to the challenges of mid twentieth century and whose mind was attuned to the pre-industrial era.'[73] Subhas was free from romantic nostalgia for the past and was a scientific modernist though he too shared Gandhi's emphasis on dignity of labour. His advocacy of economic planning was opposed by Gandhi, though Tagore supported him. Bose was not against cottage

industries but his stress was on scientific industrialization. Gandhi was not a crusader against machine industry but was so thoroughly imbued with the concept of bread labour, which he borrowed from Tolstoy and Ruskin, that he could not resist his reservations about mechanization of life. Here despite his success in mass mobilization Bose found that Gandhi surrendered to tradition and his vision of India rejected modernism and anachronisms remained like a millstone round the nation's neck. Bose naturally viewed this with an eye of repugnance. To sum up, the antithesis between Gandhi and Bose is too powerful to permit the possibility of an enduring synthesis. Politically they were poles apart particularly in their conception of the methods of struggle. At the philosophical level, however, they shared a spiritual rapport that transcended the complexities of politics. Both pledged an everlasting fidelity to the eternal values that constituted the bedrock of India's civilization. Their spiritual concept of India embodied so resplendently in Tagore's *Bharatatirtha* visualizing the grand confluence of diverse faiths on the shore of the great humanity that is India, united the two on a higher plane. Here, the political antithesis was sublimated in a spiritual synthesis.

E) Nehru the Eternal Enigma

Jawaharlal Nehru was the embodiment of unfulfilled historical possibilities. He was gifted with great qualities and immense potential. If Subhas was a warrior-philosopher, Nehru was cast in the mould of a philosopher-statesman. He had the depth of the philosopher rather than the valour of the warrior. Orientationally, he was the antithesis of Gandhi, and the nearest prototype of Subhas. He was a passionate internationalist with a global vision and perspective wider than Bose who was primarily a passionate nationalist and secondarily an internationalist. Nehru resembled Tagore in this respect and came very near to his idealist internationalism, which exalted humanity over the nation. Unlike Bose who was predominantly a man of action, Nehru was a man of thought with a certain poetic strain. Perhaps politics was not his ideal field because Nehru constantly tried to combat political problems at the abstract philosophical level and often felt lonely and isolated. The world of politics confronted him with an identity crisis which, to use the words of Tagore, made him conscious that his real place was 'not here but somewhere else.' Still it was with Subhas Chandra Bose that Nehru shared a deep affinity. History is replete with examples where personalities with

opposite traits have complemented each other and out of the clash of the thesis and antithesis, a greater synthesis has emerged. If the disparate qualities of Bose and Nehru could be combined and channelized for dynamic action, the greatest dialectical synthesis of Indian history would have resulted. That this did not happen, is often attributed to Gandhi who in the words of Nirad C. Chowdhury 'divided the two men whom history would have united.'[74] While Gandhi undoubtedly cast a spell on Nehru who as N.G. Jog says, rebelled only to surrender,[75] it is also true that one person however influential cannot perpetuate such permanent alienation between two who are made for each other. Thus, it may be contended that the reason for the parting of ways lay elsewhere. Nehru lacked the dash and desperation of Bose, but he was full of radical ideas, which were capable of changing the face of Indian politics. However when the decisive moment came, he was invariably prone to vacillation. This ineradicable tendency to compromise and avoid a final risk made Nehru the eternal enigma of Indian history. He was a tortured and agonized soul who lived with the constant awareness of his helplessness to assert himself independently. He was not sure of his own mind and thus he appeared a greater enigma to himself than to his countrymen. It was his failure to resolve his identity crisis, which infected Nehru with a complex of self-marginalization. He suffered from an imaginary feeling of weakness, which was not superimposed externally but rather self-imposed internally. It was a case of suicide of personality. Nehru was, to use Tagore's imagery again, the self-destroying star of the political firmament.

F) Consonance and dissonance 1928-32

It was from 1928 onwards that Nehru and Bose had the opportunity to interact closely at the political level. At the Madras Congress of 1927, Nehru brought up a proposal for complete independence at the instance of the revolutionaries of Bengal.[76] Bose, who was a vocal spokesman of complete independence, wrote appreciatively about Nehru, "Since his return to India, he gave expression to a new ideology and declared himself to be a socialist which was extremely welcome to the leftwing in the Congress and to the youth organizations of the country. The new phase of his public career was first given expression to at the Madras Congress."[77] Both Bose and Nehru participated enthusiastically in the boycott of the Simon Commission which Nehru alleged in a speech on January 24, 1928, denied India's

inalienable right to govern herself.[78] Bose and Nehru became joint secretaries of the Independence For India League set up in November 1928, at Delhi with the purpose of propagation of the idea of complete independence through massive mobilization of the youth. Nehru in a letter to Bose on October 2, 1928 recommended to him, the name of the prominent youth leader D. Ananda Rao[79] which indicates his concurrence with Bose on the importance of the youth movement. At the Calcutta Congress of 1928, Nehru supported Bose's amendment on complete independence[80] though he confessed later that he did so half heartedly as he knew that no struggle would be effective without Gandhi's leadership.[81] Gandhi nominated Nehru as Congress President at the Lahore session of the Congress in 1929, with the obvious intention of offsetting the growing strength of the left wing and ensuring that he would function as a dummy President and Gandhi enjoyed the dominant role. Bose did not sign the Delhi Manifesto but Nehru after initial opposition, succumbed to Gandhi and signed it. He was however heavily distraught over it as he had evidently acted against the dictates of his conscience and even thought of resigning as President. He vented his agony in a letter to Gandhi on November 24, 1929,[82] saying, that he was convinced that he had acted wrongly, but thereafter in his own words, he was calmed by "three days of reflection and a soothing letter from Gandhi."[83] His capitulation to Gandhi led Bose to write to Basanti Devi on November 24, 1929, that Nehru had "abandoned independence under Gandhi's influence."[84] He wrote with bitterness that the country regarded Nehru as 'something more than an obedient soldier.'[85] In a private conversation with Dilip Kumar Roy, he had a dig at Nehru's docile amorphousness, which resulted in his being talked into signing what Bose called the disgraceful manifesto.[86] Bose also said in a tone of disillusionment, that ever since his election as Congress President, "Nehru has been a consistent and unfailing supporter of the Mahatma."[87] This was a remarkably accurate assessment. For Nehru had inescapably come under the shadow of Gandhi and Bose could no more count on his support. Nehru did not however lose his critical focus and was one with Bose in his disagreement with Gandhi over the stoppage of Civil-disobedience. Gandhi's fast annoyed Nehru who felt that he had chosen a side issue for the final sacrifice.[88] Thus, elements of concurrence still remained though Nehru's leftist fervour was largely curbed. Despite his criticisms of Gandhi, it was now a foregone conclusion that he would never risk a break with him. For Bose, it meant the loss of a comrade in arms though he continued

to hope against hope that Nehru would shake off his weakness and line up alongside him to explore an alternative to Gandhi.

G) The Illusory Interlude 1933-7

When Bose was in exile in Europe, he wrote his famous book, The Indian Struggle where he propounded his idea of synthesis of Communism and Fascism. Nehru reacted adversely to this and wrote in his prison diary on March 19, 1935, that, "Subhas seems to be writing a deal of nonsense. He can only think of himself in terms of being a Mussolini."[89] This was not a momentary outburst but the reflection of a fundamental contradiction between Nehru and Bose. For Nehru was a staunch opponent of Fascism while Bose was never an adherent of Fascism but at the same time not averse to emulating its positive features. He was a moderate rather than an extremist critic of Fascism while Nehru was not ready to sacrifice his idealistic stand in the interest of pragmatism. In this respect Nehru the globalist could not identify himself with Bose the pragmatist who discovered fragmentary elements of nationalism in Fascism. Paradoxically, while Bose's advocacy of a temporary phase of dictatorship in India was considered by Nehru as an aspiration to become India's dictator, he himself had expressed identical ideas in an interview to the News Chronicle on January 2, 1937, saying that while he was against Fascist dictatorship, yet in times of grave crises especially of a military nature, a measure of group dictatorship may be necessary but this should not be extended to ordinary times.[90] Nehru's assessment of Bose's Fascist proclivities was not entirely correct, as he was probably not aware of his denunciation of the aggressive nationalism of Nazi Germany and the policy of imperialistic aggrandizement of Italy and Japan. His charge that Bose visualized himself as the Mussolini of India was thus unfounded.

At the personal level, Bose and Nehru came close to each other during this period. From Edward Thompson's letter to Nehru on November 26, 1935, it appears that he had asked him to use his influence to ensure the release of Bose from internment but Thompson's efforts proved abortive.[91] Nehru was also bitterly critical of the British government's policy of imposing restrictions on Bose when he returned to India after his father's death. He wrote with acerbity, "These orders were devoid of all humanity and consideration, they were applied to one who was held in affection and esteem

by his countrymen and who had rushed to the deathbed of his father."[92] Coincidentally Nehru too suffered the bereavement of the death of his wife Kamala at this time and was released from internment to enable him to reach his wife at her deathbed. From the testimony of Bose's nephew Ashoke Nath Bose, it is known that Subhas attended to Kamala with great care and was present at her funeral.[93] Bose took care of Nehru's daughter Indira and received her at Vienna on June 4, 1936. Agatha Harrison testifies that Indira was with Bose when Nehru arrived at the deathbed of Kamala.[94] It is possible that Bose and Nehru united in a mutual sympathy in their moment of sorrow and this led to the softening of their stand vis a vis each other. In a letter to Rajendra Prasad on November 20, 1935, Nehru said that Bose with his deep knowledge of international affairs was ideally suited for the task of representative of the Congress for the cause of projecting the cause of India in foreign countries.[95] Bose too heartily endorsed Nehru's idea of starting a foreign department of the Congress in a letter dated March4, 1936.[96] In view of Nehru's election as Congress President at Lucknow in 1936, Bose encouraged him to shed his inhibitions saying, "Among the front rank leaders of today, you are the only one whom we can look up to for leading the Congress in a progressive direction. Your position is unique and I think that even Mahatma Gandhi will be more accommodating towards you than towards anybody else. Gandhiji will never take a stand which alienate you."[97] Here again Bose was destined to be disappointed. Gandhi's letter to Agatha Harrison of April 30, 1936, indicates that he was sure that though Nehru was extreme in the presentation of his methods, he was sober in action. It was thus very likely that he would not precipitate a crisis and accept the decision of the majority of his colleagues.[98] That Gandhi was unerringly correct is borne out by Birla's letter to Purushottamdas Thakurdas on April 20, 1936, saying that all the resolutions adopted at the Lucknow Congress were contrary to the ideas of Nehru. Yet he did not resign but accepted his defeat in a sporting spirit.[99] In fairness to Nehru, it may be said that he could not risk a break with Gandhi because the leftist bloc was riddled with internal contradictions and hence incapable of providing him an alternative support base. After all, Bose himself was the victim of these contradictions in 1939, when he was forced to resign as Congress President. Secondly, though Bose was included in the Working Committee, his internment prevented him from serving in it thus depriving Nehru of his services when they were most needed. In an unpublished letter to Nehru on January 12, 1936, Bose wrote

"There is so much on which we agree and so little on which we disagree."[100] This indicates the renewal of his faith in Nehru, which had evaporated in 1931. Pradip Bose testifies in an interview on December 18, 1996, that Kamala Nehru had asked Nehru in her deathbed to work together with Bose in future. This might have temporarily brought the two together. The promise of union was however illusory. From the testimony of Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose in a personal interview on November 12, 1997, it is known that when Subhas invited Nehru in 1937, to reveal to him, his plans about the progress and direction of the struggle and its successive stages of evolution, Nehru delivered a most nebulous philosophical lecture with no concrete ideas. The exuberance of philosophical idealism in Nehru was the result of his internationalist outlook. This did not correspond to the nationalism of Bose, which reflected his philosophical realism. Bose never treated the anti imperialist struggle in philosophical terms but rather as a hardcore realist. He concentrated on the strategies and tactics of struggle but Nehru never approached these questions from the statesman's standpoint. He was more emotional than practical. The realist-idealist dichotomy sowed the seeds of alienation though the final break was still a thing of the future.

H) The Twain Shall Never Meet

During Bose's first term as Congress President, his differences with Nehru became acute particularly with regard to the international situation. Nehru felt that Bose was anxious not to antagonize the Fascist forces. Bose had approved the sending of a medical mission to China, who was a victim of Japanese aggression, but Nehru believed that Bose had belatedly acceded to this under the pressure of public opinion.[101] Nehru was opposed to Bose's idea of a Congress coalition ministry in Bengal with the Krishak Praja Party of Fazlul Huq. In a letter to Bose on February 4, 1939, he wrote, "Your desire to have a coalition ministry in Bengal, seems hardly to fit in with your protest against a drift towards constitutionalism. Ordinarily it would be considered a rightist step and especially now when the situation is rapidly developing."[102] Bose replied on March 28, 1939, that his desire to install a coalition ministry in Assam had been welcomed by the people of Assam and much improvement had taken place there. A coalition ministry provided the only guarantee of stable government in Bengal.[103] From the aforesaid letter of Bose, it is further known that Nehru was against his emphasis of serving ultimatum to the

British government. Bose endorsed Gandhi's policy of serving ultimatum, as this was the only way to enforce India's national demand.[104]

Nehru was against the reelection of Bose as Congress President. He wrote to Bose on April 3, 1939, "I thought it probable that you would win the election against Pattabhi, but I doubted very much, whether you could carry the Congress with you in a clear contest with what is called Gandhism. Even if by any chance, you secured a majority in the Congress, this would not represent a strong enough backing in the country without Gandhiji and effective work and even more so preparation for a struggle would be very difficult."[105] This was a fully correct assessment, which was based on Nehru's personal experience as President. On June 29, 1936, seven working committee members threatened to resign in protest against Nehru's socialistic speeches. Nehru himself contemplated resignation when Gandhi interceded and resolved the deadlock. But Nehru was certain that in the event of a similar crisis during Bose's presidentship, Gandhi would not intervene but would either directly or tacitly expedite his resignation. His prophecy came true to the letters. However Nehru overlooked the fact that Bose was made of different stuff and was not the one to be browbeaten by Gandhi as Nehru was on occasions more than one. Nehru apprehended that by challenging Gandhi, Bose would be digging his own grave. His prognostication was borne out by subsequent events but Bose dug his grave only to rise from it again and scale the Olympian heights of success.

One self contradictory aspect of Nehru that surfaced during the Tripuri crisis, was his refutation of Bose's allegation in his election statements of January 25 and 27, 1939, that secret negotiations were going on between the right wing and the government on the issue of federation.[106] Nehru criticized Bose for his insinuations, which amounted to an insult to his colleagues and added that as Congress President he should not have attached importance to press rumours and *bazaar* statements.[107] He also expressed how upset he was to learn that despite his advice to Bose to clear up this aspersion affair through a frank talk with Gandhi, Bose had not even mentioned the subject when he met him after his reelection. He wrote to Bose in a tone of disillusionment, "It made me realize how difficult it was to work together with you."[108] The available source materials suggest that a compromise on federation was indeed in the offing. Lord Linlithgow had written to the Secretary of state on April 16, 1938, that he got the impression that Gandhi would accept federation if some of the larger princely states introduced the

principle of popular choice.[109] The *Dhaka Prakash* supported Bose's allegation on March19, 1939.[110] Significantly Gandhi himself had stated on January16, 1940, that, "Whatever may be true of the members of the working committee, I fully endorse Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose's charge that I am eager to have a compromise with the British if it can be had with honour."[111] It has also come to light that Nehru sent personal and private notes to the Working committee from Europe dated September 1 and 6, 1938, where he said that Gandhi had been sending brief and cryptic notes to Lord Lothian and Agatha Harrison where he hinted that under certain circumstances it might be possible to work out a federation and that he was prepared to accept it subject to some developments.[112] This establishes indisputably that Bose's allegation was correct and while there is no evidence of Nehru's complicity, he was cognizant of the whole thing. Thus his charge that Bose had wronged his colleagues was factually untrue. Nehru perhaps thought that even if the charge were justified, it would be politically unwise to open the Pandora's box. Bose might have been able to keep the impending deadlock in the Congress in abeyance had he settled the matter amicably with his colleagues, but as Sarat Chandra Bose noted, it was indiscreet on the part of Subhas to give such a public statement without consulting him.[113] His logic was that it was illogical to bring charges that could not be substantiated. But Subhas could have easily proved the veracity of the charges had he referred to Nehru's aforesaid notes. Prof. Suniti Kumar Ghosh suggests that J.B. Kripalani the General Secretary of the Congress who was Gandhi's follower, probably concealed them from Subhas.[114] This is partially borne out by Bose's remark in his letter to Nehru of March 28, 1939, that Kripalani was not loyal to him.[115] It may be surmised that Nehru deliberately suppressed facts in the interest of unity in the Congress. He obviously did not want Bose to be eliminated from the Congress and the contemplation of that possibility made him apprehensive. He knew that in the event of a showdown with the Right wing, Bose would be utterly helpless and he himself was powerless to sustain Bose in his inevitable disaster. With all his reservations about Subhas, Nehru did not want him out of the Congress and was at the same time not prepared to risk a break with Gandhi. It was this inner conflict rather than any ulterior motive, which explains his self-contradictory posture. However, even if Bose had cleared up the matter it would not have averted the crisis because by now Gandhi's mind was made up that Bose must be resisted at all costs. It would at most have delayed the overthrow of Bose.

Nehru's reaction to the Pant resolution was however inexplicable. Bose alleged in his letter to Nehru of March 28, 1939, that he had received reports that Nehru was one of the authors of the resolution.[116] There is no evidence to support this but Nehru's reply to Bose's open question about his interpretation of the Pant resolution was evasive and ambivalent. He wrote to Bose that he had made strenuous efforts to get the resolution amended which suggests that he did not agree with its content, and yet he did not consider it a motion of no confidence but indicative of a want of full confidence in Bose's judgment. It was positively a vote of confidence in Gandhi.[117] This was most unconvincing and Bose wrote with unconcealed bitterness to Amiya Nath Bose on April 17, 1939, "Nobody has done more harm to me personally and to our cause in this crisis than Pandit Nehru. If he had been with us, we would have had a majority. But he was with the old guard at Tripuri."[118] It is not known whether Nehru supported the resolution but there is no evidence of his having criticized it either in the Congress session or at the Subjects committee meeting. Sitangshu Das says that Pant could not have acted without Nehru's consent.[119] This may have been tacit rather than direct. Even neutrality on Nehru's part would be construed as approval. In any case, Nehru was found to be a prisoner of indecision and this widened his gulf with Bose.

What made Subhas bitter to the point of brutal frankness, was not Nehru's lining up with the Right wing but his vacillations which made Nehru's position anomalous. When 12 members of the working committee resigned, Nehru did not actually resign and yet acted as if he had done so. Subhas wrote to him with a touch of sarcasm, "When a crisis comes, you often do not succeed in making up your mind one way or the other with the result that to the general public you appear as if you are riding two horses."[120] Here is an instance of laying bare the unpleasant truth because Nehru himself had said that, "it was not wholely correct that he had resigned and yet quite correct."[121] Nothing could be more vague. To Subhas he wrote that he had adopted a foolish attitude adding that he felt that he could not offer Bose his cooperation and yet he was in a sense breaking with the others.[122] Here one discerns a tone of self-criticism, which is a reaffirmation of the identity crisis, which tormented Nehru throughout his political life. He was the Hamlet of Indian politics searching in vain for an identity in the world of politics, which was never his domain.

Nehru made efforts to heal the breach between Subhas and Gandhi as

evident from his letter to Gandhi on April 17, 1939, saying, "I think you should accept Subhas as President. To try to push him out seems to me, an exceedingly wrong step. Subhas has numerous failings but he is susceptible to a friendly approach. I am sure if you made up your mind you could find a way out."[123] Nehru was undoubtedly sincere but did not realize that Gandhi had made up his mind not to find a way out. He again wrote to Gandhi on April 20, 1939, "I feel it is not impossible to tone down difficulties if you are prepared to take a good deal of responsibility."[124] He also wrote to Rajendra Prasad on April 17, 1939, "I earnestly appeal to you to move in this matter for you are one of the few persons who can greatly help in solving the tangle."[125] Girish Chandra Maiti feels that such efforts were doomed to failure, as Nehru never condemned the Pant resolution. By asking Subhas to leave the formation of the working committee to Gandhi, Nehru actually endorsed the Pant resolution.[126] There is a valid point in this because the Pant resolution was the core issue, which Nehru avoided. It is interesting to speculate what would have happened if for once Nehru mastered courage to condemn the Pant resolution. Perhaps even then Subhas would have had to go but it would have produced a psychological effect on Gandhi and enhanced Nehru's credibility in the estimation of Subhas. Moreover, Gandhi would have found it difficult to counter Nehru because he himself did not openly support the Pant resolution and would have been caught on the wrong foot. Prof. Suniti Kumar Ghosh has observed in a personal interview on September 20, 1998, that, Nehru wanted Subhas to surrender to Gandhi because it would be less advantageous to the Rightists if he chose to rebel from outside the Congress after resigning as President. There is a core of truth in this because Nehru was totally opposed to Bose's idea of the Forwad Bloc and after the resignation of Bose his gulf with Nehru became unbridgeable. Prof. Irfan Habib observes that at Tripuri, Bose encountered noncooperation from both Gandhi and Nehru.[127] From Gandhi's side it was premeditated but from Nehru's side it was an expression of helplessness. It was beyond Nehru's power to pressurize Gandhi to accommodate Bose. Bose never forgave Nehru for this.

Nehru was very critical of Bose's Forward Bloc and said in a statement from Kanpur on May 21, 1939, that separate organizations would weaken the Congress.[128] In another statement issue from Lucknow on May 24, 1939, he said that in a new organization or group with no clear principles or ideology, anventurist and opportunistic elements would find full play and

Fascist and communal elements would also come in.[129] Bose in a pointed rejoinder on August 7, 1939, accused Nehru of being a rightist posing as a leftist who ran with the hare and hunted with the hound.[130] He was now of the decided view that, "Nehru could no longer ride two horses, confronted with a choice between the right and the left, he drifted towards the right."[131] Actually, Bose was not in favour of making a fetish of unity and felt that occasional splits were not necessarily harmful as exemplified by the division of the Social Democratic Party of Russia between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks which came as a great relief to Lenin. It was the unity of action and not inaction, which was the need of the hour.[132] Nehru agreed in principle with Bose but not in practice.

Nehru did not approve of Bose's expulsion from the Congress and wrote to Sri Prakasa on August 15, 1939, that no serious disciplinary action should have been taken.[133] But he also took Bose to task for his 'persistent defiance of Congress discipline.'[134] After Bose's escape from India, Nehru was very critical of his attempt to collude with the axis powers. In a press conference at Guwahati on April 24 1942, he expressed his resolve to fight Bose if he came to India with the Japanese.[135] He was apprehensive of the Japanese forming a puppet army under Bose to liberate India.[136] Both Nehru and Bose were now reconciled to the reality that 'the twain shall never meet.'

I) Tragedy, illusion and reality

It is said that Gandhi and Subhas were such strange bedfellows that their political honeymoon could not last long.[137] This is also appropriate in the case of Nehru-Subhas relations, which Sitangshu Das regards as more complex. Beneath the veneer of a superficial commonality, there lay hidden the elements of deep-seated contradiction. The main reason for alienation lay in their psychology and here they were poles apart. This led to their different responses to Gandhi whose emotional dominance over Nehru was the effect rather than the cause of his widening gulf with Bose. Subhas was inherently rebellious. Ever since his early days he rebelled against his family and social customs that inhibited the freedom of man. He defied family taboos and nursed cholera patients. He rebelled against racial discrimination in college even at the expense of carrying the cross of Christ. Bose's readiness to stand up in defence of his convictions indicated at the very outset that he was a born leader. He was a restless soul fighting the battle of life in

the face of severe trials and tribulations and also had to go through many mental crises. In a sense, he was in advance of his age with a slight touch of eccentricity. Subhas's exposure to the realities of a turbulent life, sowed the seeds of a warrior philosopher in him at a very early stage. In contrast, Nehru's life was 'sheltered and uneventful.'[138] He received no exposure to the outside world and was cut off from the masses. Bose however came to identify himself with the sufferings of oppressed humanity as a result of his background of social service. Leonard Gordon feels that this awakened in Bose, a spirit of discovery of India.[139] He came to see with his own eyes, the sorrows and pains of his countrymen and his sensitive mind revolted against it. Nehru in contrast discovered India at the intellectual level. According to Ashok Kumar Roy, "Unlike Nehru who discovered India in History books, Subhas was a truth seeker who was closer to the soil of his country and whose pilgrimage was spiritual rather than historical."[140] This view appears correct as Nehru himself has said that it was only after his direct contact with the peasants of Pratapgarh in 1920 that he realized what the suffering masses were and what they meant to India.[141]

Nehru had an anglicized background. His long stint in England imbued him with a sense of admiration for British ways though he never supported British imperialism. Bose assimilated the positive aspects of the western culture but retained his essential Indianness. He was a much more inveterate opponent of the British than Nehru. Gandhi once commented that Nehru was 'more English than Indian in his thoughts and makeup. He is often more at home with Englishmen than with his countrymen'[142] John Gunther notes that, 'Nehru does not hate the British. He freely admits his intellectual debt to British culture.'[143] Eve curie writes in the same vein that Nehru was 'an Indian nationalist moulded by England, a foe of Britain made in Britain.'[144] Here again Nehru faced the same identity crisis and could not reconcile his Anglophilism with his nationalism. Subhas was in stark contrast, rooted in his native soil and determined to destroy British imperialism by any means whatsoever.

One decisive breaking point between Bose and Nehru was their divergent attitude towards Fascism. Bose contested Nehru's statement of December 18, 1933, that the fundamental choice before the world was between some form of Communism and some form of Fascism and he was all for the former. His contention was that 'unless we are at the end of the process of evolution, or unless we deny evolution altogether, there is no reason to

hold that our choice is restricted to two alternatives. Whether one believes in the Hegelian or in the Bergsonian or any other theory of evolution, in no case need we think that creation is at an end.'[145] Ideologically, Bose was a relativist while Nehru was an absolutist. Bose was eclectic in outlook and naturally inclined to explore the synthesis of diverse elements while Nehru was more preoccupied with antithesis and not interested in the reconciliation of contradictions. The message of universal tolerance of the Indian civilization manifested in the gospel of Ramakrishna, which Bose imbibed, accounted to his open-minded approach. He discovered a core of truth in all systems in consonance with Ramakrishna's dictum that there are as many viewpoints as there are paths. Nehru's rigid fixations did not fall in line with the liberal eclecticism of Subhas. Secondly, Bose was a believer in the eternally progressive nature of evolution and hence could not accept any ideology as the final truth. Nehru did not view the progress of civilization in its dynamic evolutionary sense. To him, Fascism was an unmixed evil. Thus he could not subscribe to Bose's idea of utilization of the international situation to India's advantage with the help of the Fascist powers. In his approach to international politics, Nehru was an idealist while Bose was a pragmatist. Moreover, Bose was predominantly a nationalist though he grew to his own variety of internationalism. Imbued with Vivekananda's belief that a subject race can never command respect in the comity of nations, Bose considered internationalism, a luxury which India could ill afford. Though to him, nationalism was the road to internationalism as he declared at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference at Poona on May 3, 1927.[146] Here, Bose clearly specified his priorities and exalted nationalism over internationalism. Towards the end of the Second World War however, Nehru modified his stance and said in the same vein as Bose, that 'internationalism can develop only in a free country.'[147] At the same time he did not swerve from his belief that Bose's expectation of expediting India's freedom in collusion with the Fascist powers, was a 'tragic illusion'.[148] According to an analyst, "Bose like Tilak, did not believe that in the conflict of interest between nations, moral and ethical considerations should be allowed to obtrude unduly. To carry excessive moral ballast was a sure recipe for a shipwreck in the treacherous seas of international diplomacy. He was so passionately set on winning freedom for India that any other consideration which might conceivably retard the achievement of this goal, seemed to him, an irrelevancy."[149] Lloyed and Susanne Rudolph argue in the same vein, that Bose represented real politik

and extremist versions of Indian nationalism that flourished in Bengal and Maharashtra. Nehru represented the moderate version whose lineage ran from Ranade to Gokhale to Gandhi.[150] Subhas was ideologically a moderate and politically an extremist, while Nehru was just the opposite. Ideology rather than Gandhi was the perpetuator of the Bose-Nehru Divide.

Ideologically, both Nehru and Subhas were socialists, but Nehru was more powerfully attracted towards Marxism. Despite reservations, he was convinced about the essential truth of Marxism and wrote in a letter to Basanta Kumar Mallik on June 18, 1936, "I accept generally speaking the Marxist analysis of history though I think that in relation to India, it does not lay sufficient stress on certain features of our past. That however does not falsify our analysis to any marked degree. I accept also the general communist goal of a classless society."[151] He wrote in his autobiography, "I dislike dogmatism and Karl Marx's writings or any other book as revealed scriptures and the regimentation and heresy hunts which seem to be a feature of modern Communism. But still I incline more and more towards a Communist philosophy."[152] He wrote to Lord Lothian on January 17, 1936, "Marx's interpretation of history is the only one which does explain history to some extent and gives it meaning.[153] Bose espoused Socialism but it was more western than Indian. He never endorsed the fundamental truth of Marxism and was against the forcible superimposition of the Bolshevik system on India. Bose had a religious streak in him while Nehru was at best an agnostic and naturally felt attracted towards Marxism, which was materialistic. A contemporary analyst argues that Bose tried to strike a balance between spiritualism and materialism as the crass materialism of Marxism promised him nothing beyond material satisfactions.[154] Subhas described himself as 'An Indian Pilgrim', which shows how deeply he was rooted in the spiritual ethos of India's civilization. He was of the opinion that Marxism had a tangential rather than integral linkage with the Indian socialist tradition. Nehru as Pradip Bose suggests was a quasi-Marxist if not a full-fledged Marxist.[155] To Prof. Hiren Mukherjee, Nehru's orientation towards Marxism was unmistakable.[156] Nehru, however, said that he preferred to use the word Socialism rather than Communism in a press statement of June 5, 1936[157] and also did not consider Communism suitable to India.[158] In his Lucknow address, Nehru came very close to Bose when he said, "I see no way of ending the poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation and subjection of the Indian people, except through socialism which is a vital creed which I hold with both my head

and heart."[159] Subhas however had misgivings about Nehru's socialism and wrote to him on March 28, 1939, "How a socialist can be an individualist, beats me. How socialism can ever come into existence through individualism of your type is also an enigma to me. If one believes in certain ideas and principles, one should strive to translate them into reality and that can be done only through a party organization. I have not heard of Socialism being established in any country or progressing in that direction except through a party. Even Mahatma Gandhi has his party."[160] Bose saw no sense in Nehru's tendency to proclaim with a certain pride that he represented nobody else apart from himself. This could help one to win popularity but it was not conducive to socialism. Bose also noted that Nehru could have achieved much more as Congress President had he enjoyed the backing of a solid party organization.[161] This is substantially correct because despite his socialist credentials, Nehru could not translate his professions into practice in the absence of a party. He wrote to Bose on April 3, 1939, that he was intellectually a Socialist and an individualist by temperament and training, which left Bose, flabbergasted. This was another typical example of Nehru's identity crisis that made him unsure of his own self. However he did not believe that Socialism suppressed individuality.[162] Theoretically Nehru was nearer to the mark for as the noted poet and dramatist Oscar Wilde has shown in his essay 'The soul of man under Socialism' that Socialism acts in the service of individualism.[163] It is doubtful whether Bose contested this but he probably objected to the kind of individualism typified by Nehru. Pradip Bose elucidates, "Nehru did curb his individualism in order to toe Gandhi's line for the sake of unity of the Congress Party. But he seemed unwilling to curb his individualism for the cause of Socialism although Bose pleaded with him to do this."[164]

In view of the above, it appears that the antithesis between Bose and Nehru was irreconcilable. Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose said in an interview on February 24, 1999, that in1939, Nehru's secretary, S.D. Upadhyay told him that Nehru and Bose were of a different brand compared to Patel and Azad and hence ought to work together. Dr. Bose then agreed with him but subsequently realized that the greatest mistake of Subhas was to expect Nehru to be his political comrade. Some scholars like Stanley Wolpert ascribe personal rivalry as the cause of Nehru-Bose differences. To Wolpert, "Nehru did not worship Gandhi or always listen to him but was ambitious enough to realize that without Bapu's support he would not get the premier

position."[165] Stephen Cohen calls Bose Nehru's greatest rival.[166] These are subjective views and cannot be substantiated though such subjective elements do exist in politics. For instance, Nehru never even once recognized the contribution of Bose as the exponent of the concept of national planning in India. Prof. Hiren Mukherjee strongly asserted in two interviews on March 23, 1997, and October 28, 1999, that it was Nehru and not Bose who was the progenitor of the idea of planning. Bose he says, did the right thing by inducing Nehru to accept the chairmanship of the National Planning Committee through his letter of October 19, 1938. However, nobody was better suited to the task. Nehru admittedly had greater exposure to the realities of the Soviet system as he visited Russia in1927, and obtained firsthand experience of planning. But it was Bose who was the first Congress President to incorporate national planning as an integral part of Congress policy. Nehru's presidential speeches at Lucknow and Faizpur were replete with socialistic ideas but did not contain any reference to planning. Nehru's contribution in popularizing the concept of planning was however phenomenal but his reticence about Bose's role is noteworthy. Though his genuflection to Gandhi is viewed as opportunistic Nehru himself offered a different explanation for the same to the American journalist Taya Zinkin saying candidly, "I let Subhas down. I did it because I realized that at that stage, whatever one's own view might be about the way India would develop, Gandhi was India. Anything, which weakened Gandhi, weakened India. So I subordinated myself to Gandhi although I was in agreement with what Subhas was trying to do."[167] Prof. Hiren Mukherjee observes, "A fixation about Gandhi's incontestable indispensability[168] remains a solitary blemish on Jawaharlal's record." Ranjit Sen explains the Gandhi-Bose rift in terms of Gandhi's inaction and Bose's over action.[169] The noted revolutionary Samarendra Basu Thakur has corroborated this in an interview on December 15, 1997, saying that Gandhi was cautious while Subhas was impatient. Anton Penilka also describes it as the clash of patience and impatience. Gandhi himself wrote to Bose on April 2, 1939, "I am an old man, perhaps growing timid and overcautious and you have youth before you and reckless optimism born of youth."[170] Similarly the Bose-Nehru divide may be explained in terms of a dichotomy of action and inaction. Here one needs to note that Nehru was never made for a leader and thus wanted to function under the umbrella of a mentor or guide. Gandhi exploited this weakness and made him emotionally dependent on him. Bose never had anyone to guide him in his

entire career except for a brief period of apprenticeship under C.R. Das. This was a blessing in disguise as Bose was able to act independently without being tied to the apron strings of anybody. In the second place, just as Gandhi exalted nonviolence over independence, Nehru subordinated national interest to the greater cause of humanity. He considered it his moral obligation to oppose Fascism first and British imperialism afterwards. In his Presidential speech at Lucknow, he said, "Inevitably we take our stand with the progressive forces of the world which are ranged against Fascism".[171] Finally Nehru was never favourable towards revolutionaries. Bhupal Guha, activist of the Sri Sangha Group, has testified in an interview on December 21, 1997, that Nehru described them as perverted youths during his visit to Behrampore jail in 1935. Bose was desperate and dynamic and derived much strength from the revolutionary movement. Nehru owed no such debt to it. Thus, his break with Nehru was the inevitable culmination of an innate antithesis. This was a tragedy for India because the prospect of union of two best representatives of the forces of radicalism, modernism and progressive nationalism, turned out to be a cruel illusion. What was required of Nehru was a metamorphosis of the soul and self, because it was in his own nature rather than the advent of Gandhi in his life, that the seeds of his break with Bose were ingrained. Nehru lacked the mental equipment for such an inflammation of the soul and thus the most stimulating historical possibilities perished in the face of the realities of life. Significantly, Tagore whose cosmopolitanism was reflected more in Nehru than Subhas, chose Subhas as *Deshanayak*. He evidently realized that the over action of the irrepressible Subhas was preferable to the inaction or belated action of Gandhi and hesitant action of Nehru. Sourin Choudhuri says that Gandhi, Nehru and Subhas incarnated self-confidence, vision and courage respectively.[172] Tagore at the fag end of his life found all the three qualities synthesized in Bose and shed his illusions about Nehru and Gandhi. He hailed Subhas as the vanguard of the liberation struggle and this was the greatest solace of Subhas in his hour of crisis. He now derived the strength to march ahead with the mission of vindicating the faith the poet of India and the world had reposed in him.

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115. See Nehru, n.90, p.324.
116. Ibid, p.340.
117. Ibid, p.353.
118. See Bose, n.106, p.144.
119. Sitanshu Das, *Subhas, A Political Biography* (Rupa, New Delhi, 2001)
120. See Nehru, n.90, p.313.
121. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Unity of India* (Lindsay and Drummond, London, 1948), p.87.
122. See Nehru, n.90, p.346.
123. Ibid, p.369-370.
124. See Nehru, 62, p.560.
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128. See Nehru, n. 62, p.550.
129. Ibid, p.554.
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131. See Bose, n.3, p.376.
132. See Nehru, n.90 p.328.
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151. See Gopal, n.112, p.643.
152. See Nehru, n. 81, p.591.
153. See Nehru, n.90 p.149.
154. Chaitali Chakravarti, "Gandhike Pelamna Subhaske Haralam" in Samajvadi *Bhavna* (Calcutta), January 18-March 17, 2000, p.22.
155. See Bose n.60, p.122.
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157. See Gopal, n.95, p.283.
158. See Gopal, n.78, p.193.
159. See Gopal, 95, p.181.
160. See Gopal, n.95, p.328.
161. See Bose, n.3, p.368-369.
162. See Nehru, n.90, p.353.
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164. See Bose, n.60, pp.133-134.
165. Stanley Wolpert, *Gandhi's Passion, The Life and Legacy of Mahatma Gandhi* (Oxford, New Delhi, 2001).
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167. Taya Zinkin, *Reporting India* (Chatto and Windus, London 1962), p.217.
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CHAPTER - IX
The Unfinished Journey

After his escape from India, Subhas chandra Bose began to articulate his plans to challenge the British Empire in armed confrontation. He initially solicited the help of Hitler but was disillusioned to discover his utter disinclination to side with the Indian cause. Meanwhile, Rashbehari Bose the Indian revolutionary in East Asia, urged Bose to come over to Japan and assume command of the Indian National Army. What happened subsequently is now history. It falls outside the purview of this study, to discuss the performance and impact of the INA. The seminal point of enquiry is whether it was historically a failure. The historical facts at our disposal indicate that the immediate mission of the INA was thwarted by an unfortunate and fortuitous conjunction of circumstances particularly the untimely advent of the monsoon and the changing war situation. Had the INA been able to capture Imphal, an achievement that narrowly eluded it, history would have taken a different turn. Though there is no scope for speculation in history, yet it would be historically valid to state that the exploits of the INA, created a potentially explosive revolutionary situation in India manifested in a massive popular upsurge that unsettled the imperialist rulers psychologically. Secondly, the INA was instrumental in creating a spirit of revolt in the army, navy and air force, which expedited the transfer of power. After the great Sepoy uprising of 1857, such organized desertion from the British Indian Army had not occurred. Thus, though from a purely military point of view, the INA was a failure, its psychological effect was far-reaching. One should remember that the success of an army does not depend solely upon victory in the battlefield. Its indirect repercussions must be taken into consideration. Considered from that angle, the INA proved to be a catalytic agent of India's freedom.

It is also important to note that the INA symbolized the final culmination of the ideals and principles of Bose. He was able to achieve religious and social unity in the INA through the elimination of communal exclusivism and reactionary social anachronisms. The INA was the visible embodiment of his concept of united India. It's significance as a role model for independent India was by no means inconsiderable. It signified the triumph of Bose's philosophy of total and all round freedom, which he expounded in India.

To Bose, freedom was not an abstract, intangible intellectual concept but a concrete idea capable of realization. The INA was the epitome of his ideology which extended far beyond political postulates and was deeply rooted in human life based on an unreserved commitment to human values. This highlights the stature of Bose not only as a warrior statesman but also as a warrior-philosopher. He had the making of a philosopher that complemented his role as a military commander. This aspect of Bose's character remains to be emphasized properly.

There is a tendency in contemporary intellectual circles to regard Bose as a reckless adventurer who acted more on the basis of impulse and emotion rather than the dictates of reason. His calculations were thus subjective and unrealistic. In his desperation he lost sight of the greater ideological questions and this led him to grave aberrations and pitfalls of judgment. To his critics, Bose was an unadulterated patriot but very myopic and ideologically confused. Today one may say with hindsight, that Bose's expectation of help from Hitler was naive. Had he rather proceeded to Japan earlier, his prospects of success, would have brightened. But this was belied by the prevarications of Japan, and his arrival in East Asia, was delayed considerably. Even so Bose was able to make some impact in Germany through his Indian Legion. He probably counted on his own charisma and was confident of winning Hitler's approval of his plans. Here, he was mistaken, as Hitler had no intention to help in India's liberation. However, it was Hitler who provided Bose with a submarine to enable him to proceed to Japan. Thus, his contribution to Bose's historic role in future was not negligible. It may be surmised that the charisma of Bose impressed Hitler who provided him with a minimum amount of assistance. Bose was thus able to extract advantage from a source where it was most unlikely.

Bose was both a nationalist and a rationalist. He was emotional in the sense that he was a sensitive being who felt deeply for the sufferings of his countrymen. His penchant for social work in his early youth, evidently under the inspiration of Vivekananda, is a clear proof of the same. It would however be more apposite to describe his nationalism as passionate rather than emotional. Aurobindo Ghosh, one of Bose's forerunners, had written to his wife Mrinalini, that one of his madness was his adoration of his motherland. Madness here does not mean irrationalism, fanaticism, insanity or mental neurosis, but selfless love for the country and the readiness to make any sacrifice for her cause. It entails serenity and equipoise rather than

demagoguery and histrionics. In all his exhortations to the youth, Bose constantly urged them to become maddened with the thirst for freedom. In the same vein as Aurobindo, he regarded India as his "Divine Motherland". He was desperate in the sense that he did not hesitate to take any risk for his country but it was never a leap in the dark. Though intuition did occasionally guide Bose in his actions, yet the motive force of his dynamism was an implicit conviction of success. This emanated not from the heart but the brain. To understand it properly, one has to recapitulate Bose's philosophical views. In a letter to Hemanta Kumar Sarkar on September16, 1915, Bose wrote, "Nobody who is not eccentric can attain greatness. But all eccentric people do not become great men. All mad men do not become great men of genius. Why? Only madness does not suffice. Something more is necessary. You cannot arrive at solutions to your questions if eccentricity robs you of self-control. One must remain calm even in the midst of emotion. Then and only then can you build your life on a constructive basis? One must control his emotions and think deeply. Without emotion, thinking is impossible. But with nothing but emotion, thinking cannot be fruitful. Many are quite emotional but do not want to think-many others do not know how to think."[1] From this, it clearly follows that Bose represented a combination of idealism and realism. He was an avowed idealist in the sense that he never swerved from his devotion to the ideal of selfless service to his motherland and was prepared to go to any length to emancipate her from British yoke. Here there was certainly an element of emotion but it had a positive connotation. For no great endeavour for the cause of one's country can be meaningful unless it is inspired by a deep and powerful feeling which springs straight from the heart. However, when one has to draw up the agenda of action, the intellect comes to the forefront. Here one may draw a parallel between Bose and Aurobindo, as both of them were simultaneously men of thought and action. Had Aurobindo not retired from active life, he would have been Bose's mentor as he was best qualified for the role of a warrior-philosopher. The spirit of Aurobindo was reincarnated in Bose.

A certain subjective element behind the crucial decisions of Bose cannot be ruled out. Gandhi often followed the dictates of his inner voice, which was a kind of intuition in spiritual garb. Aurobindo's renunciation of active politics was also in response to a higher spiritual call as he himself stated. It cannot be said with certainty whether Bose acted under any spiritual inspiration and any such line of thinking is inadvisable in a historical analysis.

The philosophical position of Bose is much more relevant here. He developed a keen analytical sense and a critical focus from his study of philosophy. In his aforesaid letter he wrote. "If emotions get the better of you, you lose reason, critical power, analytic and synthetic power. Because only in cool moments can one make proper use of these qualities."[2] Bose's actions had a romantic strain which created the impression that he acted on the spur of the moment but romance was not the quintessence of Subhas Chandra Bose. He was a visionary but of the practical rather than the romantic type. He did not build castles in the air. In an address to the INA soldiers, on September 27, 1944, Bose said, "They call me a dreamer. I confess I am a dreamer. The progress of the world has depended on dreamers and their dreams, not dreams of exploitation and aggrandizement and perpetuating injustice, but dreams of progress, happiness for the widest masses, liberty and independence for all nations." In an article published in Forward Bloc entitled "My Personal Testament" on November 29,1940, Bose clearly stated that, he had some concrete ideas on political, social and economic problems and they did not float in the air but were rooted in life.[3] He was not a utopian thinker but a philosophical rationalist. How far he exalted reason over emotion, is evident from his description of himself as Rationalist in his youthful letters to Hemanta Sarkar from Kurseong in 1915 where he addressed the latter as "Mr. Sentimen alist". In a letter to Sarkar on July 7, 1915, Bose wrote perceptively, "There are two sides to a life-intellect and character. It is not enough to offer only character to your country-you must be able to produce an intellectual ideal."[4] At the same time Bose was intensely repugnant towards tame and sterile intellectualism abounding in flowery rhetoric and ornamentation. Apart from the development of critical faculties, one also needed to unfold his creative genius as Bose indicated in the aforesaid letter. The contribution of the study of Philosophy to Bose's political career is clear from his letter to the secretary of the Philosophical Society Scottish Church College written from Vienna on September 12, 1934, where he wrote as follows- "Though circumstances have prevented me from pursuing the deeper study of Philosophy which is one of the fundamental passions of my life. I owe much to the two years study of Philosophy, which I prosecuted at Scottish Church College. It helped me to discipline my intellect and sharpen my judgment and thereby prepare myself for the subsequent struggle which has been in store for me." He added, "Originality of thought is a priceless asset to every human being." In most of his speeches and writings, Subhas

Chandra Bose expressed his infatuation for a life of adventure away from the beaten track. At the superficial level, this would seem to portray for him, the image of an impetuous being constantly pining to embark on voyages into the realm of the unknown. At a deeper level, it suggests that there was a philosophy behind his adventurism. Philosophy not only taught Bose to judge every issue on its merit, but also stimulated his creative potential. Thus even in his intellectual pursuits, Bose was inspired by a spirit of adventure. Referring to the philosophy of Kant, he wrote to Sarkar, "It assumes something to be true, analyses it and criticizes it ruthlessly and then gives it up. And having given it up, it arrives at a higher truth. Then once again, the latter is analysed and criticized in the same manner- and ultimately you arrive at the highest truth. Life is like that. By all means build up a philosophy in order to harmonise all your present activities in life. Then proceed in accordance with that philosophy. On the other hand, in the inner recesses of your mind, destroy and reconstruct it every moment of your life. Life progresses through continuous construction and destruction. Construct something then destroy it, build something else and destroy it again and so on."[5] Bose has himself testified that after taking Honours in Philosophy in Presidency College, he began to write essays in defence of materialism as an intellectual exercise. This was his initial reaction to western philosophy, which regarded everything with a critical eye, took nothing on trust, and taught one to argue logically and detect fallacies thereby emancipating the mind from preconceived notions.[6] It is noteworthy that in terms of philosophical conviction, Bose was never a materialist, but he did not hesitate to espouse it, temporarily disowning his original convictions thereby inhaling the joy of intellectual adventure through the intelligent application of intellectual dialectics. Bose's rendezvous with philosophy inspired him with the urge to explore alternatives and accept nothing as final. Thus in his political life, Bose maintained a critical focus right throughout and viewed everything objectively. At the same time he did not pose as a dogmatic nonconformist or a fierce iconoclast. Whenever he accepted or rejected anything, he did so, not ignorantly but knowledgeably. Actually Bose was first a philosopher and then a warrior. He was not a philosopher in the conventional sense, but was animated by the spirit of philosophy at every point of his pursuit. Thus, when he found his self-expression as the warrior of a subject race, reason rather than unreason was the watchword.

Closely related to Philosophy, was Bose's attraction to Psychology. He

had intended to do his M.A. in Experimental Psychology, which did not materialize. However, his interest in the subject did not dwindle. In a letter to his friend Anil Chandra Ganguly dated August 8, 1937 he wrote, "My interest in Philosophy is there-but I have little time for it. To some extent I have kept up my contact with Psychology."[7] In the same letter he wrote that he had received much benefit from the mental exercise of self-analysis that helped one to detect his weaknesses. Bose also confessed that he was able to eliminate many unworthy elements from his mind through the study of abnormal psychology and Psychopathology.[8] Self-analysis was essential to emancipate the mind from irrational proclivities and acquire the necessary mental balance for effective action. Though there was an authoritarian strain in Bose, he was not cast in the mould of a megalomaniac. An element of self-criticism was consistently manifesting in him. In his unfinished autobiography, Bose introspectively analysed his idiosyncrasies and aspired for the progressive perfection and improvement of the self. In an article entitled "Glimpses of my tour" in 1939, Bose referred to his experiences during his tour of the Central Province as leader of the Forward Bloc when he had a rare opportunity of watching crowds of men and women and studying their psychology.[9] Bose reaffirmed in this article, that he had not been able to abandon his interest in Philosophy and Psychology.[10] This had significant implications for the final phase of his career when Bose envisaged a "Total Mobilization" for raising a gigantic force for a massive assault on the citadel of British imperialism. This required a perceptive understanding of human psychology in order to galvanize the masses into militant action. The people he encountered in East Asia lacked political consciousness as well as any genuine feeling of nationalism. One had to appeal to their innermost and sensitive instincts and sentiments to set their minds aflame. Here Bose's affinity to the science of Psychology stood him in good stead.

The success of Bose in eliciting the spontaneous obedience of the people may be partly attributed to his personal charisma but primarily to his philosophy of life. The response to his call for utmost sacrifice was overwhelming because the charisma of Bose reflected his fundamental philosophy, central to which was the principle of love. The people to whom Bose's fervent appeals were addressed, felt a kind of spiritual kinship with him. The title *Netaji* was not conferred on Bose by any institution but signified the people's spontaneous acclamation and acceptance of him as their beloved leader for whom they were prepared to stake their all. It was

not obedience under duress, but rather a natural self-identification with the man of their heart. An anonymous rebel daughter of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment has recorded in her diary on July 9, 1943, "Netaji stands upright and erect as he speaks into the mike. He has few gestures. He does not indulge in hysterical oratory. In a sober, sedate yet firm voice, he argues and argues and argues. Every man and woman in the audience feels that he is talking to him or her in particular He indulges in no theatricals. No water to be sipped, nobody to fan him, not a scrap of notes to help memory, no fuss and no fluster of papers. He stands as if your father was standing in front of you, appealing to you, reasoning with you, emphatically appealing to the better side of your nature. You feel you must be a cad, a selfish brute, an anti social creature not to cooperate with him to refuse him the things he asks for. He is a spellbinder all right but minus the hocus pocus of a magician." This very clearly distinguishes Bose from dictators of the like of Hitler who personified stonehearted ideologues. People were mesmerized by their melodramatic gesticulations but did not enthrone them in their heart. To be ensconced in the heart of the people, one has to be something more than a mere warrior and Bose was just that, a warrior philosopher.

To unravel the secret of Bose's success, one must take cognizance of the fact that he was essentially a humanist with an abiding faith in human values supreme among which, was the principle of love. He has clearly stated in his autobiography, "Love is the essence of the universe and is the essential principle in human life. For me the essential nature of reality is love."[11] Ever since his early youth, Bose's heart was fertilized with the seeds of love for humanity under the influence of Vivekananda. His enthusiastic participation in social work is a clear pointer to his fund of sympathy for the teeming millions. In a letter to Hemanta Sarkar on June 21, 1914, he exalted love for humanity over maternal love saying, "Compared to the love I have tasted in this life, the ocean of love I find myself in, mother's love is like a puddle. In this self-centred world, man's only refuge is mother's love and that is why they raise it so high. But somebody who can give a man from the street the highest place in his heart-how big is his heart-how sublime is his love!"[12] How deeply Bose nurtured this spirit in his heart is apparent from one of his undated letters to his mother from Ranchi in his early youth where he wrote, "You are a mother, but do you belong only to us? No, you are the mother of all Indians-if every Indian is a son to you, do not the sorrows of your sons make you cry out in agony? Does not your heart bleed at

the sight of the present deplorable state of Indians?"[13] When Bose first joined politics, his initial activities were more of the constructive philanthropic type rather than political. It was as a social worker that he attained acclaim during the flood relief campaign in North Bengal in 1922. Sir P. C. Roy the noted chemist and nationalist, was profoundly impressed by Bose's efforts to provide succour to the flood-affected destitute and has stated in his memoirs that the heart of Bose "always melted at the sight of suffering humanity."[14] Even when he was commander of the INA, Bose contributed Rs.50,000 for the orphan home of Ramakrishna Mission Singapore and arranged for food and clothing for nearly 300 orphan children. This signified the practical application of the principle of love, which was the linchpin of the life of Subhas Chandra Bose.

As commander of the INA Bose displayed the toughness characteristic of a military leader but combined with it, there was also a certain tenderness, which endeared him to his soldiers. He used to personally attend to injured soldiers and they found in their leader, a source of solace in the midst of sorrow. During the retreat of the INA from Rangoon to Siam Bose personally accompanied his beleaguered soldiers on foot traversing the road leading to the Sittang River constantly attending to the sick and arranging medical treatment for those with foot sores.[15] Bose demonstrated that even in a military venture the philosophy of universal humanism could be triumphant. There was nothing esoteric about the spell he cast on the people. Bose was a human being of flesh and blood and yet his followers almost deified him in the final phase of his life. Many of them are inclined to ascribe supernatural power to him. With due respect to Bose's magnetism, one should be careful not to stretch it too far. It is true that in the final phase of his life, Bose emerged as an integrated being .His entire life was a constant process of self-perfection where each phase was to mark an improvement over the previous one. In the INA phase, Bose had overcome many of his earlier inhibitions and rectified many lapses. Thus, those who saw him for the first time, found in him, a role model. They adored and eulogized him. Bose had by now attained the closest approximation to the common man's concept of a perfect human being. He had undergone many transformations and though he did not repudiate his essential self, he was a changed man in many respects. This aspect deserves some attention.

One singular aspect of Subhas Chandra Bose was his open-minded approach to life and its realities. However in his early life he was encumbered

by some self-imposed inhibitions, which reflected a kind of dogmatic conservatism. He has himself recounted his intense struggle to sublimate the sex-instinct in his early youth, which almost became a matter of obsession for him.[16] Bose's close friend Dilip Kumar Roy has observed that under the influence of Vivekananda, Bose came to regard India as a holy land where celibacy was the universal ideal. Thus when he went to England to compete in the I.C.S examination, he maintained a distance from women with extreme caution.[17] This, however, elevated his image in the esteem of the women of England who were intensely enamoured of him but found him unapproachable while others hankered after them and craved their company. Bose induced Dilip Kumar Roy to promise never to visit any nightclub in England, dance with women and take wine.[18] From Roy's testimony, it is known that Bose deplored the fact that many talented Indians wasted their time abroad in love affairs instead of cultivating contacts with eminent scholars, attending lectures, witnessing instructive plays, concerts, etc.[19] Here it would be unfair to accuse Bose of conservatism because he had a valid point that Indian youths abroad, should prepare themselves for national service rather than squander away their money and time in enjoyment and fun. At the same time, it is true that Bose at this point of time did not realize that if one had to live one's life in it's fullness, then each and every facet of life, had to be tasted. According to Krishna Bose, when Bose toured England, he was acutely conscious of the master-subject relationship between England and India and thus many positive features of British life escaped his attention. He could not open his mind and thus his vision was blurred.[20] There is a valid point here, because after the Oaten incident, Bose had become racially biased against the British. This is evident from his letter to Hemanta Sarkar on November 11, 1919, expressing his delight at white skins cleaning his shoes. It is true that he was not blind to the positive features of British national character as evident from his appreciation of their punctuality, robust optimism and strong commonsense in a letter to Sarkar on January 21, 1920.[21] However his overall attitude to wards British life and society, was more negative than positive.

Even after joining politics, Bose initially remained aloof from women and shunned their company. Probodh Kumar Sanyal, the noted littérateur has cited the testimony of Latika Bose, niece of Aurobindo Ghosh, who approached Bose with the request to accept her as a co-worker. Bose, who appeared to him, a celibate inspired by the ideal of rigid asceticism, agreed

on condition that she would never enter his office room and meet him only at his brother's place. Secondly, in any public meeting the two would undertake not to recognize each other or pose together for photographs.[22] It would not be an exaggeration to say that, an excessive seriousness pervaded the life of Subhas Chandra Bose at this point of time. Though there were touches of humour in his letters written from Mandalaya prison, he was by and large grave and glum his outlook. In his "Dreams of youth", he exhorted the youth to inhale the air of joy, in life, he himself was yet to drink the cup of life full to the brim. Krishna Bose says that Bose tended to regard women in India as motherly figures, which was in perfect consonance with the Indian tradition where free mixing of men and women was inconceivable though it was quite natural in Europe.[23] Dilip Kumar Roy says that it was under the influence of C.R. Das, that Bose began to think deeply about sex life, which probably led to the modification of his views on the subject.[24]

The days of his exile in Europe in the thirties symbolised a turning point in the life and outlook of Subhas Chandra Bose. He now approached European culture and civilization with an open mind and assimilated much of it shedding his earlier inhibitions to a large extent. Dilip Kumar Roy says that, in England the only European lady for whom Bose developed a soft corner was Mrs. Dharamvir, wife of an Indian whom he treated with affection. He wrote to her that she never appeared to him a foreigner though it was "easier for a leopard to change his spots than for me to come out of the shell of my reserve in a mixed company"[25] This was, however, the exception rather than the rule. In Europe, Bose became intimate with women like Heddie Fullp Muller, Naomi Fetter, Kitti Kurti and Emile Schenkel. He regarded them as friends rather than mother figures. There is no denying the fact that in Europe, Bose came to realize the liberating effect of the society on the human mind. It does not logically follow from this that he was totally metamorphosed by the impact of westernization. Some of the old hangovers still remained as evident from his objection to Indira Gandhi, daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru and India's ex-Prime minister having short haircuts.[26] Bose's preference for the traditional Indian sari endeared Mrs. Muller to him as she wore the Indian dress. It is noteworthy that he was intimate with only those European ladies who had love and sympathy for India and who were not averse to adopting certain tenets of Indian culture.

Bose wrote his unfinished autobiography in Europe when his transformation was taking place. Referring to his somewhat fanatical crusade

against sex, he wrote "It is now a moot question whether we should spend so much of our time and energy in trying to eradicate or sublimate an instinct which is as inherent in human nature as in animal life... If I could live my life over again, I should not in all probability give sex the exaggerated importance, which I did in my boyhood and youth. That does not mean that I regret what I did. If I did err in overemphasizing the importance of sex-control, I probably erred on the right side, for certain benefits did accrue there from-though perhaps incidentally. For instance, it made me prepare myself for a life which did not follow the beaten track and in which there was no room for ease, comfort and self-aggrandisement."[27] Despite maintaining a tone of self-defence alongside self-criticism Bose appears to have realized that life had to be lived in its totality. Amiya Chakravarti, Rabindra Nath Tagore's secretary, wrote to Tagore from Carlsbad on July 22, 1935, that, Bose had changed in every respect and his vision had widened. Needless to say that Europe helped to concretize the philosophy of freedom of the self, which Bose championed and Bose acquired his new vision through personal exposures and experiences.

During his first visit to England, Bose expressed himself strongly against alcohol consumption. Dilip Kumar Roy says that he considered it a barbaric form of animal delight.[28] In the final phase of his life Bose himself occasionally took alcohol. According to his trusted officer Abid Hasan Safrani, he learnt social drinking in Europe. In Singapore, he used to take brandy, which gave him energy.[29] Abid Hasan claims that in Europe he used to smoke very little and it was Hasan who taught him the habit of smoking. Bose used to smoke when he was agitated and it helped him to calm down.[30] From the testimony of A.C.N. Nambiar, it is known that in the course of a meeting in Paris, Bose ordered a glass of Dubonnet for himself and Nambiar and said, "When I left India this time. on the basis of certain experience and careful reflection, I had made up my mind not to bestow exaggerated prominence to certain items like food and dress and came to the conclusion it was only sound and sensible to make adjustments practical and propitious. Nationalism and patriotism rested on stronger roots."[31] It may be inferred that this change did not occur overnight but was the direct result of Bose's new acquaintances and realizations in Europe. When Bose was in Vienna in the thirties he did not eat beef, but when he was in Berlin in 1941, he began to consume both albeit in moderate doses.[32] The process, which started in Europe in the thirties, now matured.

Subhas Chandra Bose had accepted the image of a sanyasin as his role model. In his autobiography, he described himself as an *Indian Pilgrim*. Here he obviously acted under Vivekananda's influence. Significantly at this time he was going through a process of change, which convinced him that certain fixations and predispositions had to be dispensed with because one could remain an ascetic at heart even after some new adaptations in ways, manners and habits. Bose's nephew Pradip Bose provides two alternatives explanations- Either Bose felt the pressure of public opinion in countries far away or he himself ceased to give importance to these things.[33] The first one appears more plausible. Pradip Bose rightly says that from the traditionalist angle this change of attitude would appear as degeneration. However this was the period when Bose reached the acme of his political career when he gave his best and achieved the most. Thus, the Degeneration theory does not stand.[34] Actually Bose did not deconstruct his earlier image but reconstructed it with a certain practical human face. There is no reason to believe that as a soldier of freedom he disowned his self-proclaimed identity of an Indian Pilgrim. In fact his visualization of himself as a pilgrim, shows that even while opening the doors of his mind to western influences, Bose retained his fundamental roots, which were firmly ingrained in the cultural-civilizational heritage and ethos of India that was essentially spiritual despite certain elements of materialism. Thus he did not allow the western influences to overshadow the essential Indianness of his outlook and orientation.

Western secularism that stood for the rejection of religion was incompatible with Bose's line of thinking. He accepted it to the extent that he wanted to retain religion as a matter of personal faith, which had to be separated from the political sphere. In the field of politics, the only religion was nationalism. The slogan Jai Hind, coined by Bose, transcended all religious and communal overtones. It signified a spiritual commitment of all communities to the cause of a common motherland. He viewed India as his Divine Motherland ever since his early days and this conviction remained unbroken till the end. The passionate letters he wrote to his mother in his early youth incarnated the spirit of Vivekananda portraying India as God's beloved land.[35] All his writings and speeches in India were replete with eloquent references to Vivekananda. In the final phase of his life however, Bose seldom if at all alluded to him. At the same time it would be totally wrong to infer that the cyclonic monk no longer inspired him. For Bose used to regularly visit the Ramakrishna Mission at Singapore, and meditate late

at night in its secret sanctuary. What was manifest earlier was now latent. Religion had its own contribution to make to Bose's achievements as a leader, because he sought sustenance and strength from it as a deep personal conviction. It did not however intrude in his political life. Bose thus grew into a *Secular Pilgrim*.

If India is to rediscover Bose in the new millennium, some vital questions must be answered. Firstly, every historically significant personality is the product of his age and his relevance is necessarily limited to his age and time. Many changes have taken place in India and the world since the final disappearance of Subhas Chandra Bose in 1945. Thus to establish the relevance of Bose to modern India, one has to highlight the universal significance of his message which transcends the limits of age and time. The question is, whether Bose really had any such universally valid message for India today? Secondly, was Bose a creative thinker of such stature that his prescriptions may be considered the panacea for the problems of India today? It is true that he had expressed his thoughts on India's post-independence reconstruction and prescribed his diagnosis of the same. However, society, politics and economics are never static and thus the nature of problems also change and problems that demand a particular type of response at one time demand a totally different approach in another epoch of history. Thus, the India of today was foreign to the imagination of Subhas Chandra Bose. Many of the problems of India, which Bose spotlighted, are undoubtedly predominant today, but their complexity has increased manifold. Can Bose be regarded as the architect of a creative response to the multitude of challenges confronting India today, which is of enduring value even in the new millennium? Thirdly, it is an interesting though hypothetical question as to whether Bose would have successfully solved India's problems had he returned to India and risen to the helm of affairs. Since speculation has no place in history, it would be intellectually more sound to ask whether Bose's style of leadership would have suited present day India.

Without belittling Bose's stature as a leader in any way, one should be cautious and balanced in his attempt to relate Bose to modern India. It is true that India today is confronted by a crisis of leadership and governance and no nation can advance without leaders whose primary task is to provide a stable government. India needs statesmen who are not only men of action but thought as well. In a rapidly changing world scenario, no country can progress without a guiding philosophy of life. Warrior philosophers of the

like of Bose are virtually extinct today because the days of colonial subjection exist no more. However, imperialism is yet to be wiped out from the face of the earth and there are glaring examples of the sovereignty of a free people being besieged by a powerful nation the latest case provided by America's assault on Iraq. Under the circumstances, statesmen must combine in themselves, the virtues of astute politician, tactful diplomat and dauntless commander. These attributes belong to the world of action, but action derives its strength from the world of thought. India needs statesmen who are philosophers not implying armchair visionaries excelling in lofty thoughts, which have no relation to reality, but rather the prototypes of Plato's Philosopher King. Plato wanted to entrust the guardianship of society to a class of enlightened men who aspired for the highest knowledge, had the truest perception of the welfare of state and society, and were totally above narrow self-interest. They proclaimed the sovereignty of the intellect, through a reasoned pursuit of truth. Plato entrusted the task of safeguarding the security of the state to the warriors who comprised a class of trained, professional soldiers. They were not however qualified to guide and run the state, which required philosophic wisdom and moral character. This was the forte of the Philosopher King who represented knowledge in action. The last Indian statesman, who provided the nearest approximation to Plato's Philosopher King, was Jawaharlal Nehru. He was a man of thought whose mind was replete with lofty ideas, but he lacked the motive force to translate them into action. Moreover he was a romantic idealist who was guided by sentiment rather than reason and lived with the illusion of fond hopes and dreams. Paradoxically, Base who too had a romantic element in him was better qualified to fulfill the requirements of Plato's concept because he represented a combination of the warrior and the philosopher. The noted scholar R.K. Dasgupta has observed that "Subhas was at once, great statesman and great soldier, but in both capacities he fulfils Plato's definition of a philosopher."[36] At the same time, one should be very careful while comparing Bose to Plato because the latter was never a democrat by any stretch of imagination. He has been castigated as a champion of totalitarianism of the Fascist type. While there is an element of truth in this, what is usually ignored, is that Plato prescribed a prolonged process of education for the ruling class so that they would develop into the best type of human beings. This was obviously intended to ensure that the rulers ruled in the interests of the people. Bose either consciously or unconsciously followed the same line of

thinking. While Bose did believe in the necessity of a temporary phase of benevolent dictatorship in India, he was not oblivious of the possibility of the system being turned into a perpetual dictatorship which would render impossible, the gradual transition to democracy as he envisaged. In his written speech sent to the third Political Conference in London on June10, 1933,Bose emphasized on the training of the workers of the party in charge of post-independence India whom he visualized as "freedom-intoxicated missionaries" who were morally prepared people willing to make the maximum sacrifice for the country.[37] Though he did not echo Plato's recommendation of a life of monastic asceticism for the workers, yet his envisioned missionaries of freedom, were ascetics at heart for whom, life was a mission the fulfillment of which, was their noble duty. Despite a certain similarity of outlook in this respect, Bose had little in common with Plato who was never a champion of democracy. Bose on the other hand, had an entirely new concept of democracy to offer, whose relevance to modern India deserves close scrutiny.

It is an interesting paradox that while Bose was not an original thinker in the conventional sense, he did make a creative contribution to the thought-life of India. In his article "My Personal Testament", he said that, he would like his ideas to be worked out and amplified by the succeeding generation. With due respect to Bose's intellectual calibre, it may be said that he did not have the time to build up an independent thought-system of his own. However, interspersed throughout his works and speeches, there are fragments of thought which act as powerful stimulants to creative imagination? Here again there is a problem because those who feel inspired to carry the unfinished task of Bose to its final conclusion will have to interpret his ideas in their own way, which may not necessarily be in consonance with what Bose had in his mind. An intellectual hiatus is therefore very likely whereby ideas that were foreign to Bose, might be ascribed to him. One has to be very careful so that the gap may be minimized if not eliminated. The key to unravel the ingenuity of Bose's thought lies in a proper appreciation of his ability to grapple with paradoxes. His response to problems and questions were often paradoxical which accounts for both its fascination and complexity. Bose's model of democracy was a curious amalgam of centralization and decentralization, national interest and local autonomy, freedom and authority. The true test of a thinker lies in his ability to reconcile disparate elements. The extent, to which Bose succeeded in this, needs to be examined.

Bose provided his own answer to the central problem of Political Science,

the reconciliation of liberty and control. He wanted to strike a balance between unbridled individualism and unrestrained authoritarianism. He wrote to Hemanta Sarkar on September 26, 1915, "Germany has found an answer to the problem of adjustment of individual freedom with state control as in peace time the people enjoyed unfettered freedom but when the call came all voluntarily renounced their freedom and presented themselves obediently and ready with arms."[38] Notably at this time the rise of Hitler had not taken place. Yet the disciplined foundation of German national life, appealed to Bose. He was not in favour of arbitrary curtailment of individual freedom but believed that in times of national calamity, unreserved self-surrender to the nation must be the order of the day. This is what Bose meant when he said in a speech on September20, 1931 that the individual must merge himself in the nation.[39] As the commander of the INA he remarked in the same vein at the All Malai Chettiars and other Indian Merchants Conference on October 25, 1943, "Legally speaking there is no private property when a country is in a state of war. The government has absolute right over the lives and properties of its people during such emergencies."[40] This may sound like the voice of a dictator but exactly two months ago he had stated on August 25, "I regard myself as the servant of 38 crores of my countrymen"[41] He was also clear on the point that under normal circumstances, the state should be the servant of the people. Though philosophically he was most inspired by Hegel he was careful enough to avoid the totalitarian elements of Hegelian philosophy, which left the individual entirely at the mercy of an omnipotent state. In his *Kabul Thesis* entitled "Forward Bloc–Its Justification", Bose used the Hegelian dialectic to counter the drift of the Congress towards authoritarianism saying that the antithesis of history is not necessarily a negative one and the Forward Bloc was a natural reaction to The Fascist tendencies within the Congress.[42] This was a democratic interpretation of Hegelianism which was singularly novel.

Bose was a votary of centralization. Here he differed with both C.R. Das and Aurobindo Ghosh who were in favour of decentralization of power. Sitangsu Das a recent scholar, finds this quite natural because statism was the sheet anchor of all ideological positions in the inter war decades. Aurobindo found in excessive centralization a fatal weakness of the Indian polity, which accounted for the downfall of the Mauryan Empire. Bose was not unaware of local autonomies regional and ethnic but unlike Aurobindo he never elevated this to a principle from which India must never depart.[43] While

this is a largely correct assessment, Bose's thoughts on decentralization normally receive less attention than they deserve. He repeatedly referred to the ancient Indian tradition of local self-government and the popular panchayats, which were in vogue among the Malawas, the Lichchavis and Kshudrakas. He noted that while the Mughals had a highly centralized government, they rarely interfered in provincial affairs and local self-government, based on the old system of village communities, was left untouched.[44] At the Anti Compromise Conference of the Forward Bloc at Ramgarh in June1940, which was presided by Bose, it was resolved that "In order to carry on the struggle efficiently and to take over the responsibility of administration when the necessity arises, Peoples Panchayats should be set up in every village as well as in every factory. It is desirable that Panchayats should be the product of local initiative as far as possible, endeavour to develop the initiative of the masses who have long been in the habit of taking orders from above. These Peoples' Panchayats backed by volunteer organization, should be the bulwark and the popular sanction behind the demand for a Provisional National Government of the Indian people to whom, all power should immediately be transferred."[45] This clearly shows that Bose was as ardent a champion of peoples power as Gandhi but did not subscribe to the extreme Gandhian model of decentralization, that of Gram Swaraj. He desired that after an initial dose of centralization, power should be devolved to the lower layers of government. This would strike the golden mean between centralization and decentralization. The idea of empowerment of the centre at the expense of disempowerment of the local units was anathema to him.

Bose's quest for the golden mean was central to his concept of democracy, which was his most innovative contribution to political thought. There was an Aristotelian element in him though he did not subscribe to his advocacy of an all-pervasive state system. He did not view any system in absolute terms but rather by its relative value. He knew that mere rhapsodizing the virtues of democracy, as an abstract value-system was not enough. An excessively permissive society, could lead to anarchy and open the floodgates of corruption. Democracy can succeed only through timely improvisations and adaptations to situational exigencies. Occasionally there has to be an undemocratic approach to democracy implying and involving the application of force. In India practices like *Sati* and witch hunting are rampant today and these cannot be eradicated through conventional democratic

means. In such cases even dictatorship can be an aid to democracy. Tagore had stated in one of his poems, "Striking with thy ruthless hand Oh Father into that heaven awaken my land." Bose's model of leadership corresponded to this spirit. His was a paradigm of "Missionary Adaptive Democracy" where varied elements would be adapted according to the needs of the hour but none would be final or eternal. Only the ultimate mission would be pursued unwaveringly.

A recent Austrian analyst Anton Pelinka has said, "Bose was in principle, no friend of the democratic process. As someone with a strong inner drive, Bose too was willing to show consideration for something like public opinion to a very limited degree."[46] He contends that, Bose would not have given prominence to democracy had he been in power in India.[47] This view reflects the lack of proper appreciation of Bose's conception of democracy. Penilka is right in his observation that Bose's vision of India was that of a nation-state which should modernize rapidly.[48] What he overlooks, is that Bose's blueprint for modernization was based on his new concept of democracy, which was democratic in spirit but undemocratic in appearance. Dr Anita Pfuff has opined that in the initial stages Bose would have adopted a system for India which was not strictly democratic but something very close to it She suggests further that he would have changed his policies according to the needs of the hour.[49] This view is much nearer to the truth. After all Bose's journey was an unfinished one. If India is to follow the path of Bose, then Bose must be rediscovered and rehabilitated in national and international life and this is a great intellectual challenge. For Bose has thrown up interesting possibilities but the end result is not known. One thing is however certain that is, in the present world, no system or ideology can be eternal. And one has to make adjustments and adaptations in order to progress. The current developments in China, who has abandoned the erstwhile path of Communism and embarked on new experiments like open market economy and recognition of private property, is in a sense, a vindication of Subhas Chandra Bose. The statesmen of India today must respond to the rapidly changing world scenario with an open mind and ideological flexibility instead of diehard doctrinarism. There is a long road to traverse, for which Bose has provided the torch to illuminate the darkness, but the end point is still obfuscated. One has to proceed murmuring the query of Tagore, "What lies at the end of the road"?

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Dr. Sumit Mukerji, born in 1961, graduated from St. Xavier's College, Kolkata. Received his Ph. D. degree for his research on *The Political Thoughtand Principles of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose : 1921-41* from JadavpurUniversity in 2001. More than thirty research papers have been published indifferent journals and periodicals. Serving more than eighteen years, under the West Bengal Educational Service, Dr. Mukerji, an erudite scholar of Political Thought andIndian Politics, is presently posted as Reader in Political Science at Presidency College, Kolkata.

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